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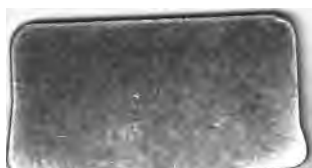
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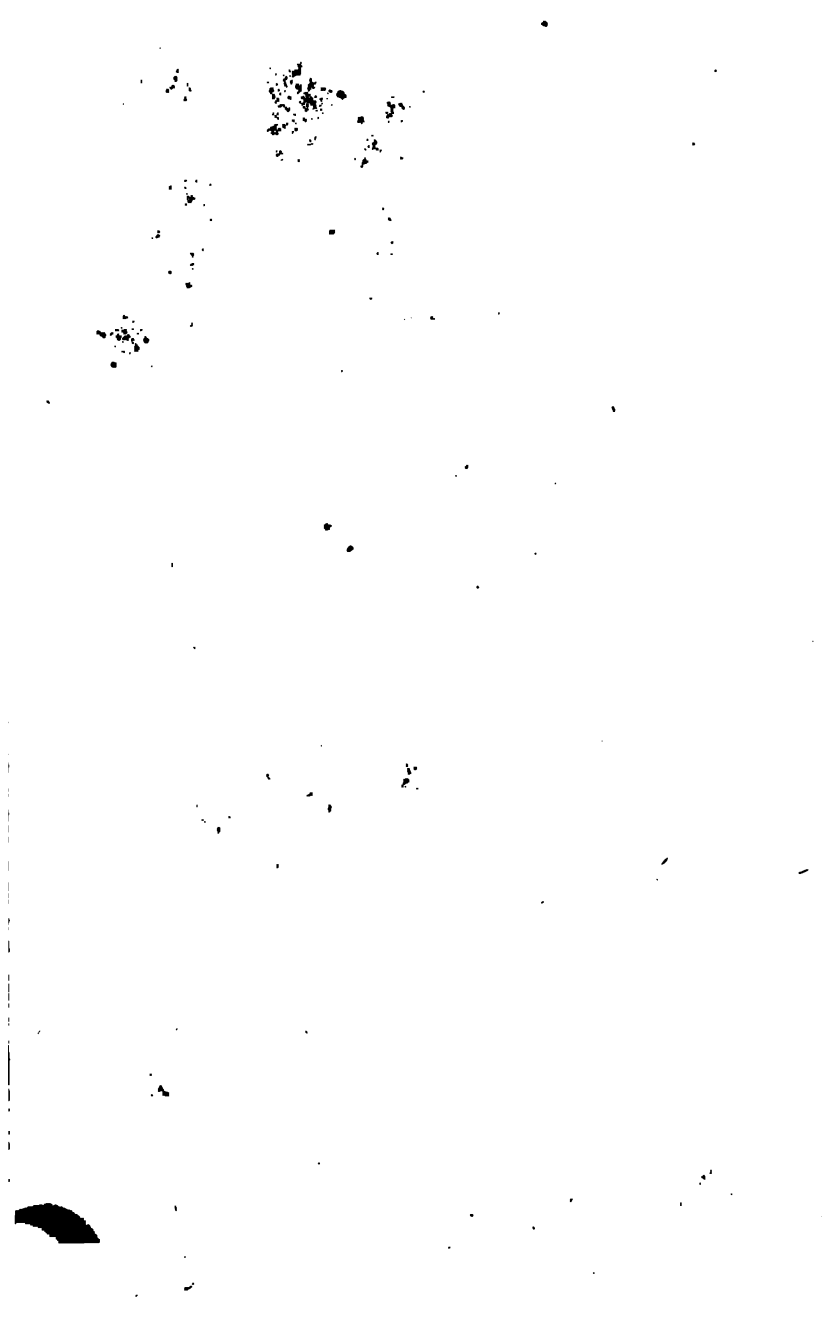
*REV. WILLIAM BALFOUR.*



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THE  
ESTABLISHMENT PRINCIPLE  
DEFENDED

A REPLY TO THE STATEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE OF  
THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ON

*DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT*

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM BALFOUR

HOLYROOD FREE CHURCH, EDINBURGH

*WITH A PREFATORY NOTE*

BY

JAMES BEGG, D.D.



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1873

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

BY JAMES BEGG, D.D.

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IN common with many, I rejoice that the admirable and eloquent articles in defence of the principle of Church Establishments, by the Rev. William Balfour, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Courant* newspaper, are now collected together, and given to the world in a volume. The principle of Church Establishments, properly understood, and apart from adventitious circumstances, is just the principle of national religion. It has many ramifications all springing from an acknowledgment of the universal supremacy of Christ, and bearing upon the duty of nations and their rulers to promote the advancement of true religion, and the prosperity of Christ's cause and kingdom. It is connected with the protection of the Sabbath, the promotion of scriptural education in the public schools, the conservation of the purity of the Scriptures, and the sacredness of the law of marriage. It assumes that nations are moral and responsible creatures, accountable to God in their corporate capacity, and the proper subjects of rewards and punishments. It implies that wherever God's Word exists, its existence and

influence ought to be nationally acknowledged as the only supreme authority and the fountain of law. "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." The civil magistrate is "a minister of God," and therefore bound to honour and serve Him, whilst "he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

All this is very powerfully expounded and enforced in the present volume, by one who, whilst not personally connected with any actual Establishment, feels, as a Christian and a patriot, the duty of contending earnestly for such important principles. Our ancestors regarded the expression, "the present truth," to mean the truth presently called in question; and the publication of the recent Manifesto, by a committee of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, in which national religion, properly understood, is derided, all Establishments of religion are emphatically condemned as unscriptural and injurious, and in which also it is affirmed that "civil legislation ought not to extend beyond the outward and secular affairs of communities," was a virtual challenge to all the friends of national religion. The doctrine of the Manifesto, indeed, is not new. It is just the old and atheistic type of Voluntaryism, its true and consistent type, against which a successful battle was maintained in Scotland thirty-five years ago

—against which a noble struggle is being maintained at the present moment in Great Britain and America. The American struggle is peculiarly interesting, because the question of national religion is there stripped of all peculiarities. As there is no actual Church Establishment, Voluntaryism—which is a very different thing from voluntary benevolence—has been fully tried, and found wanting, and threatens yet more serious consequences to the great Commonwealth; nay, it is demonstrated that the State needs the help of religion much more than religion needs the help of the State. The interest in the question, however, is enhanced in Scotland at present by the twofold consideration, first, that a combined effort is being made to give practical effect to Voluntaryism by the overthrow of the existing Establishments, coupled with a demand for “religious equality,” or, in other words, that the Government shall stand entirely aloof from all concern about truth, and treat truth and falsehood as if they were alike; and secondly, by the effort made to force a union of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches on the footing of virtually sanctioning the obnoxious principles of the latter Church, or at least of making the principle of national religion as a practical acknowledgment of the universal supremacy of Christ—held by the Church of Scotland since the Reformation—an open

question ; in other words, erasing it from the creed and testimony of the Free Church.

The subject discussed in the following treatise, therefore, is of urgent and paramount importance, and it is comparatively little understood. No doubt one leading design of God in permitting, in His adorable Providence, the present struggle, is to bring this question into prominence. Few men understand it so well as our excellent author, and the general study of his powerful exposition and exposure cannot fail to be of much advantage to statesmen and theologians, as well as to Christians at large. We have here set before us in lucid development at once the paramount authority over men in all combinations and in every relation of life, the conflict of ages, the last battle of the Church of Christ, and of the kingdoms of the world. Blessed be God, we know infallibly how this struggle shall terminate. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee (the Church) shall perish ; those nations shall be utterly wasted." "All ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Governor among the nations." "Arise, O God, judge the earth ; for thou shalt inherit all nations."

EDINBURGH, 50 GEORGE SQUARE, *May* 1873.

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## ESTABLISHMENTS OF RELIGION DEFENDED.

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THE document which is commented on in these pages is entitled, "Statement by the Committee of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, of the grounds which justify and demand prosecution of this object"—the "Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Established Churches of England and Scotland." It is alleged by some that it cannot be considered as an authoritative document until it receives the formal sanction of the United Presbyterian Church. This may be technically correct, but, circulated as it has been to the extent of 52,000 copies, under cover of the *Missionary Record*—claiming as it does to be a statement of the principles with the assertion and illustration of which the United Presbyterian Church has been conspicuously identified—being, as Dr Cairns has declared, "a strong and *clear* statement of *our* voluntary views,"\* an opinion which has been vir-

\* Letter to Mr Nixon in *Daily Review* of January 21, 1873.

tually concurred in by almost all who have spoken in their Church courts, we are warranted in holding it, to all intents and purposes, as an authoritative document, or, at all events, as embodying the principles generally maintained throughout the body on this subject of Voluntaryism.

This Manifesto, which was published in the January number of the *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, is in many respects the most extraordinary document which ever emanated from a committee of any Christian Church.\* It affords a favourable and desirable opportunity for exposing the unscriptural, illogical, and revolutionary character of those principles which are in vogue with so many in our day. It is the very thing that has been asked for again and again during the course of the negotiations for union with the Free Church, but it has been studiously withheld; and its appearance now, after having allowed the leaders of that Church to educate her ministers down to Voluntaryism, is not without its meaning and its lessons. We now know exactly, on their own authority, what the so-called Christian Voluntaryism of the United Presbyterian Church really is. It is just what we always believed and declared it to be—national atheism, or the old Voluntaryism of the very

\* The Manifesto will be found at the end of the volume.

worst type—the Voluntaryism of the time of the French Revolution—the Voluntaryism of the time of the controversy, only attempting to disguise itself under the appellation of Christian. It is not now possible for any man, with this document in his hand, to maintain, with any show of truth or consistency, that the Voluntaryism of the United Presbyterian Church is changed. We find ourselves confronted with the old foe of true civil and religious liberty, whose appearance forty years ago called into the field a host of able combatants, who wielded the weapons of their warfare with signal skill and success, driving him from every position he attempted to occupy, whether of reason, conscience, or Scripture. His deadly wound, however, appears to have been healed, and all the world is wondering after him as he anew appears on the field to do battle against the Lord's right, as King of nations, to have His laws enforced and the interests of His kingdom promoted by the nations of this world. It threatens to be a desperate, but, let us trust, a final, struggle with this dangerous enemy of the rights of God and man. And however some who stood forward as noble champions of truth in days past may have cast aside the armour in which they were then clad, and lost faith in the weapons with which they then did such execution, the armoury

whence they were taken remains unchanged, and, clothing ourselves in the old armour, and laying hold of the old weapons, we shall find that they have lost nothing of their wonted power to shield us from the attacks of the enemy, and to work havoc in the ranks of the false friends and open foes of truth.

A league with United Presbyterians in this war against national religion on the part of Dr Candlish and his friends will be a humiliating and melancholy termination of all their vaunted principle at the Disruption, and a triumphant fulfilment of the prediction, as we may call it, of the Dissenters in 1841, when, in reply to a friendly address by ministers of the Establishment, drawn up by Dr Candlish, they say—"You remark that, suppose you were compelled to separate from the State, you would not on that account change your principles, but would hold then, as now, that the magistrate ought to endow the Church. [Dr Candlish's words are, "We could defend the doctrine of Establishments."]. The separation might not affect your convictions, but it would materially affect your relations with your neighbours. By placing you on the common level of the other Churches, you would feel towards them fraternal sympathies, which are considerably repressed in your present position. And your

brethren around you, feeling the harmlessness of your theory when it ceased to be acted upon, would more readily and heartily co-operate with you, and would indulge a hope, warranted by their own history, that a reconsideration of the question, in new and more favourable circumstances, might produce such changes in opinion, which, however carefully and conscientiously formed, cannot be considered immutable, as would lead to as intimate union in sentiment, affection, profession, and effort as can reasonably be expected in the present state.”\* Is it so that a generation is not to pass away before the author of the address to which these words were a reply, and many of those who joined him in it, are to justify the hope which the dissenting brethren express, and to belie their own solemn declaration—“Even were we obliged reluctantly to abandon the Established Church of Scotland as indefensible, we would defend the doctrine of Establishments notwithstanding; and we would continue in the persuasion that a time is coming when that doctrine will be found to lie near the foundation of the real welfare of nations, and the ultimate prosperity of Christ’s Church.”† But we shall proceed with the examination of the paper.

\* “Friendly Reply to Friendly Address,” &c., p. 5.

† “Friendly Address to the Dissenters of Scotland,” p. 3.

## I.

### "POSITION OF THE STATE CHURCH SYSTEM."

THIS is the title of the first section, in which we have the programme of the work which this Christian Church sets before itself, and the ground and warrant for its proposed action. It had been well had they begun by defining terms, for it must be somewhat confusing and perplexing to ordinary readers to find such expressions as "State Church system," "civil establishment of religion," "endowment of religion," "legal creed," "the magistrate's authority in religion," and the like, turning up again and again in all varieties of connections, as if they all meant the same thing, though it is well known to every one who knows anything of the controversy that this is very far from being the case. We shall content ourselves with entering our protest against the supposition that these terms are synonymous, and that in contending for the Establishment principle we are contending for all that Voluntaries are pleased to assert to be included in it. It is an old device of theirs to confound what is accidental with what is essential, in the hope of thereby securing a verdict against the truth. The opponents of this statement are avowedly opposed to what they term "the State Church system"—root

and branch—in its principle and its practical manifestation; it shall be our endeavour to vindicate the *principle* and its *legitimate* practical issues, and to make it apparent that it is only in so far as these are recognised and enforced that the true welfare of the community will, with God's blessing, be promoted; through the cordial, harmonious, and scriptural co-operation of Church and State.

What, then, do United Presbyterians understand by the State Church system? This is subsequently explained to be all *statutory enactments* in favour of religion, which is neither more nor less than the national recognition of God or national subjection to Christ; for, as Dr Buchanan says in his lecture in 1835, "How can a kingdom or nation, *as such*, serve the Lord Jesus, but by professing its allegiance to Him through the medium of its legislature and its laws, the only channels through which the mind of a people, in their collective capacity, can be expressed?"\* It is then against this that the United Presbyterian Church, as the champions of what they term "*Christian* Voluntaryism," are enlisted. This, as they say, is "the well-known position" of their body. We concede to them, and are prepared to prove it, that they have never said or done anything inconsistent with this position. And they are determined, as they are entitled, to

\* "Lectures on Church Establishments;" Glasgow, Lect. i., p. 7.

take the van in the war that is now to be waged against this principle. It would appear that there is another class of Voluntaries, who may be termed *political*, who have arrived at the same conclusion with the United Presbyterian or *Christian* Voluntaries, in regard to the State Church system, or the national recognition of Christ and His Church; and although the latter are very glad, apparently, to know of their existence, and that they will not be indifferent or inactive spectators in the conflict, they are not disposed to identify themselves with them, or to take them into their counsels, because, we presume, they have rather a bad odour in the community, and their principles are understood to be pretty closely allied with those which most people regard as infidel. Political Voluntaryism sustains somewhat of the same relation, in our opinion, to Christian Voluntaryism which Jesuitism does to Romanism.

Besides the political Voluntaries who go, and have always gone, the whole length with them in opposing the national recognition of the Church of Christ, the Christian Voluntaries are encouraged to go forward in their present attack on existing Establishments, because of a movement in that direction by "other bodies," who do not as yet entirely sympathise with them in their anti-State Church principle. Among these the Free Church holds a prominent place, and

it is well for them to know to what they are committing themselves, in this onslaught on existing Establishments. They have their objections to them, as everybody knows; but they never took up the position in regard to the Establishment in Scotland, that the vitiating flaw which, in their judgment, had been admitted into its relations with the State, was of a kind which might not be removed, and that, being removed, they would not be glad to be connected with a State Church. On the contrary, Dr Chalmers said, from the Moderator's chair of the first General Assembly of the Free Church—"Though we quit the Establishment, we go out on the *Establishment principle*; we quit a vitiated Establishment, but would rejoice to return to a pure one. To express it otherwise—we are the advocates for a national recognition and national support of religion—and we are not Voluntaries." \* Further, their Claim of Right and Protest proceeds upon the same ground, for it concludes with the prayer, "that God in His own good time would restore to them these benefits (the benefits of an Establishment)—the fruits of the struggles and sufferings of their fathers in times past in the same cause." If, then, the Free Church is to stand true to her own position and historical relation, it is by maintaining and pressing upon the attention of our rulers her prin-

\* "Proceedings of Free Church Assembly, 1843," p. 12.

ciples in regard to national religion, and thus endeavouring to influence them in undoing what was done by them at the time of the Disruption.

It must be the aim and endeavour of all who maintain the scriptural doctrine of National Establishments of religion, to obtain, if possible, with God's blessing, the removal of all evils and abuses connected with existing Establishments ; and should they fail, or should it appear to them hopeless to make the attempt, they can, *even then*, only take part in a movement for their overthrow, which shall be based on securing the maintenance in its integrity of our Protestant constitution, and a national recognition and promotion of the interests of true religion and the Church of Christ. To take part in a movement against existing Establishments, without having duly considered how these all-important results are to be secured in the event of the movement being successful, is to betray the truth into the hands of the enemy, and to surrender the nation to the worst of evils. It were well in the present crisis did men ponder the weighty words of the late Dr M'Crie—"The system which would equalise all kinds of religion in the eye of the law, which proclaims a universal right and liberty in such matters, and deprives religion and its institutions of the countenance and support of human laws, though it has a specious and inviting appearance,

contains in its bowels, like the Trojan horse, a host of evils, which, issuing forth, would spread devastation around, and soon lay the bulwarks and palaces of Christianity in the dust." \*

It is to lead on a movement which cannot fail to be attended with such disastrous results that this manifesto has been issued. We could understand and sympathise with a movement grounded on the alleged evils of existing Establishments, even though we might call in question the justice and truth of some of the allegations. But in the present instance there is not a word to that effect. It is not the efficiency or inefficiency with which they may be subserving the ends for which they have been established that is referred to as influencing this Christian Church in endeavouring to rally the forces against them. The more efficiently they may be performing their work, the more desirable it must be in the estimation of those holding the principles of Christian Voluntaries to have them overthrown, though it might not be so easy of accomplishment. And hence we find, as a matter of fact, that it was when evangelical religion was reviving in the Established Church, and threatened to extinguish Dissent, that the Voluntary controversy began forty years ago; and it is somewhat strange that this new movement should have

\* "Statement of Difference," &c., p. 29. New edition. Chas. F. Lyon, Edinburgh.

commenced when the existing Establishment in this country is gaining strength, and beginning to take measures for the removal of an old grievance.

It is a rooted hatred to everything like a national recognition of Christ and His Church that lies at the foundation of this movement; and hence the ground and warrant of it, *as prominently put forward in this manifesto*, is "that civil legislation ought not to extend beyond the outward and secular affairs of communities." This is the dominating idea of the statement. It is the distinguishing characteristic of Voluntaryism—the Voluntaryism which has prevailed in the Secession Church from the time when it ejected the late Dr M'Crie. It is expressed in the new "Narrative and Testimony," which was issued at the time of their apostasy, in the following words:—"The power competent to worldly kingdoms is wholly temporal, respecting *only* the *secular* interests of society."\* It is therefore no new nor undefined doctrine; and it is utterly vain for any man to attempt to modify or explain away its meaning. It has and can have but one meaning, which is clearly brought out in the subsequent part of the manifesto. It is a most mischievous and God-dishonouring principle, which lays the axe at the root of all national morality and religion, and is, in short, the disown-

\* "Narrative and Testimony," p. 135. Reprint in 1817.

ing of Christ's prerogative as "the Governor among the nations." It draws a distinct line of demarcation between the United Presbyterian Church, and all the Protestant and Reformed Churches, which with one consent declare "that civil authority is not limited to the secular affairs of men, and that the public care and advancement of religion is a principal part of the official duty of magistrates." Professor M'Ilwaine, of America, at the recent Convention in New York, in connection with the interesting movement in that country in behalf of national religion, expressed himself in the following manner:—

"In this country, though there is far greater Christian light here than anywhere else, religion and politics have been unlawfully divorced, and this divorcement is favoured by the Constitution of the United States. The tendency seems to be all the time for men to drift further and further away from religious influences the more they are connected with politics. The roots of morality are in religion. It is not possible there can be any deep-seated morality in an irreligious people. There must be connection and communication between religion and politics . . . In avoiding mention of the Church, our fathers avoided all mention of religion, and this failure has exerted a corrupting influence on our political morality. It has given birth to the common remark, 'We must not bring religion into politics. The only way to keep religion pure, is to keep it separate from politics.' But it does not seem to have entered into the minds of men that this is a two-edged sword, which cuts both ways. When we withdraw religion from politics to keep religion pure, *what is to keep politics pure, thus separated from religion.* When we have taken religion out of your political life, the salt is taken away, and it

is left to irretrievable corruption. . . . There is an immense difference between the morality of our people and the morality of our politics ; the difference is lamentable, and it cannot continue long in the direction it is now going. The whole nation is affected by such public morality. . . . If our political life becomes demoralised, as it threatens to become, how long will the common life of the people continue pure ?”

These words are deserving of serious consideration.

The authors of the Manifesto tell us that “they (United Presbyterians) owe it to the cause of truth, identified with their history, to hold forth, as well as to hold fast, a distinctive testimony against civil Establishments of religion, as radically injurious to the interests of religion, opposed to the genius of its institutions, and fraught with political and social injustice ;” and they are encouraged to prosecute their indiscriminate and unhallowed raid against Establishments by the fact that one Church—that of Ireland—has been disestablished and disendowed ; and by the imagination that there is *a loud cry* for the like treatment of those in England and Scotland, and that, indeed, the existence of Establishments is “known (?)”, both in the ecclesiastical and political world, to be only a question of time.” Raze them ! raze them ! as *essentially* opposed to civil and religious liberty, is *the war cry* of Christian Voluntaries. They have many enemies and few friends.—The

current of public opinion is with us.—Already all the Papists, infidels, and renegade Free Churchmen are with us in this matter.—The Government will do anything to obtain our aid.—The tide is rising, and we maintain that “neither in the Old Testament nor in the New has the State Church system the *slightest* countenance.” How is it possible for the power of assertion to go further? The Establishment principle has not “*the slightest* countenance in Scripture, not even in *the Old Testament!*” What says Dr Charles J. Brown to that? What will the community not swallow, if they can swallow that? The men who hazard such a statement must have great confidence in the implicit faith of their credulous readers. We shall hear what they have to say in their defence under another head; meanwhile, we would only ask the question, Where did all the Reformers find the principle, if not in the Word of God? If there was one thing that characterised these men more than another, it was their patient and prayerful study of the Scriptures, their continued appeal to them in support of all the doctrines they maintained, and their profound deference to their dictates. They, with one consent, found the Establishment principle in the Scriptures, where Christian Voluntaries do not see a trace of it!

## II.

### "FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM."

IN this section we are presented with the features of the State Church system as they appear to Christian Voluntaries, or as Christian Voluntaries are pleased to represent them. If they had deliberately made the attempt, they could not have palmed upon the credulous and ignorant a more complete caricature of the Establishment principle than we find under this section. Instead of anything like a true portrait, they have so sadly distorted and disguised its features, that we are not astonished that they should be horrified at the creation of their own fancy. To defend such a system as they delineate is what few will undertake, and what we, at least, have no intention of attempting. The very first thing the United Presbyterians were bound to do was to establish the personal identity of this system which they describe with the vital and scriptural doctrine of Church Establishments. It were worse than useless to pronounce sentence of death upon a man whose personal identity with the accused had not been satisfactorily made out. And yet this is the

very thing which these Christian Voluntaries do ; for it must never be lost sight of that it is the State Church system (as they term it) *as such*, or the national recognition and support of the Church of Christ, not existing Establishments merely, whose features they profess to sketch. Indeed, in so far as they allude to existing Establishments at all, it is not as being corrupt, or as, in their estimation, being other than Establishments might and should be, but as of *necessity* embodying the essential features of the Establishment principle, as they are pleased to describe it. Their verdict, therefore, is pronounced *against this principle*, rather than existing institutions ; and it will be a most suicidal act on the part of those who maintain the Scriptural principle of Establishments, should their objections against existing Establishments dispose them to join with such allies in seeking their overthrow. Dr Chalmers said, "I cannot imagine that the existence of the Free Church can have anything like a hostile influence upon the established institutions of the country. . . . They, the Free Church, are not Voluntaries ; and I confess to you that I should look with a sigh to the demolition of the framework either of the Scotch or of the English Establishment." \* We must distinguish things that differ,

\* "Evidence before the Sites Committee of the House of Commons, 1847." Third report, p. 129.

if we are not to destroy what is good, when seeking to rectify what is evil.

Now, the question is, Have the authors of this manifesto faithfully portrayed the Establishment principle as contended for by all the Reformers, and embodied in the original constitution of the Church of Scotland? If so, then we join with them in their verdict against it. But if it is a mere phantom generated amid the strangely conflicting elements that are at work in the minds of Christian Voluntaries, as we can easily demonstrate, it will not be expected that we should contend against it; it will be enough that we expose its true character. Indeed, this document confirms us in the opinion which we have long entertained, that Voluntaryism somehow has a strange power of warping the consciences and perverting the intellects of its votaries, so that they view everything bearing upon national religion through a distorting medium. We cannot otherwise account for the gross, and we should say palpable, misrepresentation of the Establishment system which is given in this document. But however we may thus charitably account for it, we cannot justify it; and we are all the more disposed to condemn a system which exerts such an injurious influence over the minds of men. Let us hear what they have to say. They maintain that the two essential elements

of the State Church system, are—1. The recognition and support of *some* religious expression of the community; and 2. Its control and guidance by the State. Now, it will not do to allege that this is a fair description of the State Church system because it has been maintained by some advocates of it. They know, or they ought to know, that it is the very reverse of a fair representation of the system as held by its true advocates.

1. The first element, or *the recognition and support of some religious profession*. While all Protestant Reformers maintained that the care of religion is a principal part of the magistrate's duty, as the guardian of the first as well as the second table of the law, they no less strenuously contended, as *against this first of the so-called elements* of the State Church system, that it is not *some* or any religious expression of the community which the magistrate is to recognise and support, but the profession of the true religion as recorded in the Word of God. This attempt to charge it upon the Establishment principle as confounding the distinction between truth and error is not new; and its reassertion in this Voluntary manifesto is one among the many things that go to confute the statement of those who attempt to cover their own change by alleging that the Voluntaryism of the United Presbyterians has changed. Foremost among these is Dr Buchanan of

Glasgow, and we feel that we cannot more effectively, or in more polished language, rebut this charge of the present Voluntaries, than by quoting his words in disposing of the charge as preferred by the old Voluntaries.

“Another method,” he says, “by which it has been not unusual with our opponents *to hide from the public eye* the real nature of the question at issue, has been by striving to make it appear as if the Church Establishment principle must go unavoidably to the confounding of the great distinctions between truth and error; and as if the advocates of that principle were bound by it to justify the civil authorities of a nation in supporting and propagating *any* religion, however false or foul, which had gained the ascendancy over their own minds, or which happened to prevail among the people at large. In a word, that as Churchmen we are laid under an *absolute necessity* of maintaining it as a righteous thing in the King of Spain, for example, to establish Popery—in the Grand Turk to establish the Koran of the impostor Mahomet, or in any of the sovereigns of the Pagan world to establish the abominations of idolatrous superstitions. Now this were all very well, if what we, as Churchmen, are contending for amounted to this—that it is the duty of rulers to lend the sanction of the civil power, and the aid of the national funds, in support of whatever they may choose to regard as religion. But all that we contend for is, that it is their duty to do these things for the *true religion*. . . . We hold that every man is responsible for the opinions which he entertains—that the mind of God is recorded in His Word, in point of fact—and that it is at our peril that we take any other meaning out of it than what He designed to convey. This principle every sound Christian must hold, whether he be Churchman or Voluntary. And if we apply it to the question as to the duty which we contend to be binding upon civil magistrates—the duty of countenancing and supporting the true religion—it scatters at once to the winds the charge, that

we are laid, by our own principle, under the necessity of justifying the establishment of a false religion, if it only chance to be the religion of the rulers of any given State. It is *their business to find out the truth.*"\*

The language in which this charge against the Establishment principle is reproduced in this manifesto, is such as almost to suggest the thought that its authors had a design to provoke Dr Buchanan to reiterate his old arguments if he dare, or else to be silent for ever. They say, "this principle (of Establishment) carried through, extends to *any* (religious) expression—Pagan, Moslem, or Christian." Instead of countenancing the adoption of such a sinful course, the Establishment principle rests on the declaration of Christ, "He that is not for me is against me." Inasmuch as this is no less applicable to nations than to individuals, it is manifestly the so-called Voluntary neutrality, and not the Establishment principle, that is chargeable with the fearful guilt of arming the nation against Christ. That we do find, as matter of history, that all kinds of religions—Pagan, Popish, Moslem, Christian—have been established throughout the earth, is no more a valid argument against the Establishment principle than it is an argument against Voluntaryism, for we find as matter of fact that all varieties of

\* "Lectures on Church Establishments," Lect. i., pp. 5, 6. Glasgow, 1835.

religious beliefs and practices have been adopted and promoted under the influence of Voluntary societies of a professedly religious character. The real question is, If the Word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament is an infallible rule of faith and manners for men in all stations and relations, why should the magistrate, with this Word in his hand, be unable, amid the great variety of beliefs that prevail in the nation, to distinguish between what is true or false in religion, any more than the individual? How should the existence of a variety of religious beliefs within the region of his jurisdiction shut the magistrate up to the necessity of countenancing all, if he is to countenance any, when no such necessity lies upon a man in any other relation in life? And if truth is discoverable by the magistrate, as the person responsible for national laws and national action, then surely he is bound to embrace it, and to forward it, and *nothing else*, among the people under his jurisdiction. This is the Establishment principle for which we contend as lying at the very foundation of all true national greatness and prosperity. It has certainly a very different aspect from that deformed thing it is represented to be, when it has passed through the alembic of Christian Voluntaryism. It is the doctrine which is embodied, as we trust to show,

in these words of the apostle—"He is the minister of God to thee for good;" and in our Confession, chap. xxiii. 1—"God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under Him, over the people, for His own glory and the public good."

2. The other element which is declared to be a distinguishing feature of the State Church system is, *control on the part of the State over the Church*, or public religious profession, to which it gives its sanction and support. According to the notion of Christian Voluntaries, the creed, constitution, and jurisdiction of the Church become what they call "legal," and, *necessarily*, subject to the supervision and control of the State, the moment that an alliance is formed between them, no matter how carefully the Church may have guarded all these against the unscriptural interference of the State, or how distinctly the State may have bound itself to respect and defend them. One would naturally think that, if there were two proprietors whose lands marched with each other, and who were rather disposed to make mutual inroads on each other's grounds, it would rather have the tendency to prevent than to encourage or sanction such violations, should they come to some amicable understanding, and bind themselves by solemn contract to adhere to the arrangement. But what every one would under-

stand as the most likely way of preventing disputes between parties in regard to their respective rights—to have them distinctly defined, and each party taken bound to adhere to them—is the very thing, in the judgment of Christian Voluntaries, to bring an Established Church under State control; and that, too, notwithstanding that their respective jurisdictions have been defined and limited by the Word of God.

This, like the other element of which we have spoken, is no *new* doctrine with the Voluntaries; and it is very instructive that, when professing to bring out the features of the State Church system, they bring out most clearly the personal identity of the Voluntarism of the United Presbyterian Church of the present day with that of the Voluntary controversy. As the former misrepresentation was conclusively disposed of by Dr Buchanan in 1835, this latter was no less conclusively answered by Dr C. J. Brown in the same year of grace. The Voluntaries maintain now, as they did then, that Establishments, are necessarily inconsistent with the Church's spiritual independence. This is so preposterous, that, to use their own language in former days, it is rather deserving of a smile than an argument. In their reply to Dr Candlish's second address to Dissenters in 1841, they say—" *Where there is State pay, there must be State dependence.* . . . It will not

do to reply to all this by telling us that you and the State have 'co-ordinate powers'—that you form two independent powers negotiating with one another; a plea often advanced, and which has seldom been gravely answered, solely, we apprehend, because a smile is thought better in such a case than an argument. *You co-ordinate with the State!* Any three deacons, met in the vestry of an Independent chapel, might advance the same claim."\* We presume, Dr Candlish, in allying himself with them now, has been influenced by the concluding wish of the Dissenters in that paper:—"We wish you to afford as good evidence of your attachment to Christians who will befriend, as to the State that thus afflicts you; that you would prefer union with them to connection with it; and that, boldly and nobly bidding endowments and bondage a simultaneous adieu, you would refresh your own spirits, and those of brethren who love you by becoming free indeed."† We do most sincerely wish him all the refreshment in his *new position* which the recollections of his friendly correspondence with Dissenters, and other acts in defence of the national recognition of the Church of Christ, can afford; as for ourselves, we must say, "O my soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."

\* "Friendly Reply," &c., p. 4. † Ibid, p. 8.

The authors of this manifesto know quite well, or they ought to know, that it has always been contended that the spiritual independence of the Church is an inalienable right derived from her Divine Head which she cannot surrender, and which she does not surrender by the simple fact of entering into an alliance with the State. As her connection with the State did not confer it, neither does this connection of itself deprive her of it, any more than separation from the State of itself necessarily secures it. It is a doctrine which is as much opposed to *ecclesiastical* as to *civil despotism*. The doctrine has always been asserted and defended on the ground that Christ in His Word has bestowed a distinct and well-defined jurisdiction upon His Church, with which the State has no right to interfere. This is what every Church of Christ must possess, which is neither more nor less than "co-ordinate jurisdiction" with the State. The Church's decisions, within its own sphere, are as final and conclusive to all spiritual effects as are the decisions of the State within its sphere to all temporal effects. And that this should be such a laughable claim on the part of an Established Church, in the judgment of Christian Voluntaries, can only be accounted for on the ground that, in allying itself with the State, the Church, *by this simple act*, divests itself, in their judgment, of all

claim to be regarded as a Church of Christ. And although they do not in so many words assert this, it is quite manifest, from the language of the Dissenters in reply to Dr Candlish, that they are not altogether without their doubts as to the Christian character of an Established Church. They say, "You refer to your character as a Church of Christ—a character which, you justly remark, you cannot suppose we *altogether* deny you. We believe that *very* many members of your churches are genuine followers of the Redeemer—that many [not *very* many] of your pastors are men of God—and that your *society* forms part of the professed visible kingdom of *our* Lord."\* This is Dissenterism ! Whatever Christian Voluntarism may say to the contrary, it has been conclusively demonstrated, both historically and dogmatically, that the Church does *not necessarily require* to unchurch herself in becoming allied with the State. On the contrary, it is the same Word which gives laws to the Church that lays the obligations upon the nation to countenance and support her ; and that Word clearly defines the limits of the jurisdiction of both Church and State, so that neither can intrude itself into the province of the other without sin. The intrusion on the part of the State into the province of the Church, so as to control and direct her affairs, is

\* "Friendly Reply," &c., p. 5.

Erastianism. And anything like Ecclesiastical domination on the part of the Church is Popish. Both are to be condemned.

As matter of history, the Church of Scotland, in entering into alliance with the State at the first Reformation, did not compromise nor surrender her spiritual jurisdiction. In ratifying the creed, constitution, and jurisdiction of the Church, the State did not confer these upon her; on the contrary, the State acknowledged her as a free, independent, and spiritual kingdom, already in possession of them, and entitled to retain them; and hence the Act 1592 is entitled "Ratification of the Liberty of the True Kirk." The contrariety of the Establishment principle to the spiritual independence of the Church was not known in those days, neither had it been discovered at the time of the second Reformation. In regard to the Act 1649, to which allusion is made in the manifesto as being Erastian in its character, Dr C. J. Brown says, in his lecture in 1835—"How finely does the very existence of this statute demonstrate the practicability of an alliance of Church and State on terms honourable to both, and further demonstrate how nobly and successfully the Church had struggled during previous years to maintain her spiritual independence! . . . Voluntary Churchmen, *out of* an Establishment, *talk* of the independence of the

Church—our forefathers, *within one*, bled and died for it.”\* In the 3rd section of the 23rd chapter of the Westminster Confession, in which the duty of the civil magistrate to countenance and support the Church, or the lawfulness of a civil Establishment of religion, is clearly laid down, the spiritual independence of the Church is no less explicitly declared as that which the magistrate ought to recognise and respect. It is said, “The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; yet he hath authority,” &c. And however the judgments of the Westminster divines may be treated with contempt by men who look down from the lofty heights of Christian Voluntaryism, the Christian public will know how to estimate their opinions. That the views maintained by the Westminster divines were those contended for during the struggle which issued in the Disruption it were useless to prove. In short, none but Christian Voluntaries maintain anything else; they stand alone in Christendom in proclaiming a union between Church and State to be an unholy and unscriptural alliance, degrading to the character and subversive of the liberties of both!

Whatever may be said against the existing

\* “Lectures on Church Establishments,” Lect. iv., p. 15. Glasgow.

Establishment in this country, the Christian Voluntaries, had they any sense of shame, would be the last men in the world to say a word about it, as it was through their influence, in no small degree, that the Disruption was brought about; and it will not do for them, at least after having assisted in defeating the Church in her struggle, to turn round and say that State connection implies State control. It were well for these Christian Voluntaries to recall the appeal of Dr Candlish—"Are you *first* to lend your aid and influence to defeat us in our contest for principles which are yours as much as they are ours, and *then* to turn our defeat into an argument against the principle which is at stake between us? Would this be fair in you? Would it really convince us?"\* This is the very thing they have done and are doing. And is Dr Candlish, by allying himself with these men, to declare to an intelligent public that his defeat has convinced him that in order to the Church's being free it must be disestablished.

We concede to the Christian Voluntaries that the Establishment principle does allow to the State a certain control, but it is a control *over its own acts and gifts*. Should the Church outrage its own constitution, or subvert any article of its own creed which was ratified by the State, the State would be

\* "Friendly Address to Dissenters," p. 6. 1840.

entitled to withdraw from her its countenance and support. But it has no right of control over the creed, constitution, or jurisdiction which it did not confer. They are not the gifts of the State, except where an Erastian supremacy is conceded; and they are not necessarily or legitimately under the control of the civil magistrate.

It is important, however, when Christian Voluntaries record such a foul slander against the Establishment principle as opposed to the Church's spiritual independence, that the public should know what they understand by the independence of the Church. It is neither more nor less, as we gather from their reply to Dr Candlish's second address in 1841, than *independence of all control human and divine*. They say, "Be assured of this, in seeking independence, and retaining your position as a State-paid Church, you have common sense against you. What! Can it be thought that you may revolutionise the government of your Church, and render it Independent or Episcopalian if you will—that you may change the creed, and teach any doctrine or no doctrine; . . . and yet that the State shall have no right to sit in judgment on your doctrines and your doings?"\* To all this we answer, certainly not. That would be lawlessness with a purpose. Such conduct on the part of the

\* "Friendly Reply to Second Address," p. 4.

Church would involve its disestablishment by a faithful State. But as the Establishment principle does not confer upon the State the right to interfere with the Church's spiritual jurisdiction, no more does it confer upon the Church the right to revolutionise her constitution, and preach no doctrine or any doctrine at her pleasure. This more than questionable privilege is not granted to the Church by the Word of God; and if this be what Christian Voluntaries wish to enjoy, they must put themselves beyond the pale of Christendom and human society; and if they do flatter themselves that they have obtained it in a state of separation from the State, only let them outrage the constitution of their Church against the remonstrances of a faithful minority, and we rather think that they shall find to their consternation and dismay that they are not beyond State control. Is this the liberty and independence of non-Established Churches?

### III.

#### “THE SYSTEM IS UNSCRIPTURAL.”

##### *The Divine Prerogative.*

THIS is the heading of the third section of the manifesto. And the attempt is made to establish this,—1st, By applying to it the test of *the general principles of Scripture regarding the nature of religion and the Church*; and, 2ndly, *the special rules and examples of Scripture*. Instead of the Establishment principle, or the Established Church system, being condemned by the test which is here applied, the strongest possible confirmation is given to it as most scriptural in its character and most important in its bearings, as it is evidently only in its right practical manifestation, that we can hope to be saved from the desolating influence of the Communistic principles of Christian Voluntarism, as advocated in this manifesto. For whether the authors of this document know it or not, the principles laid down in it go to overthrow the very foundations of all *family* as well as *national* religion, indeed of all definite and established belief of divine truth together. They are the

natural outcome of the philosophy of Hume, and the principles which gave birth to the French Revolution. It is well that we are so distinctly informed what is the real basis of operation against existing Establishments, and what we have to look for as the consequence of their overthrow. But we shall hear what they have to say for themselves.

The State Church system, it seems, violates the general principles of Scripture regarding the nature of religion and the Church.

(1.) *The State Church system invades the Divine prerogative.*—If so, it ought to be condemned; but if, in attempting to fix this charge upon the Establishment principle, they unwittingly bring it home to Voluntaryism, then it must fall under the condemnation which they have pronounced against its opposite. This will not be the first time since the days of Haman, that a man has been hanged upon the gallows which he had prepared for another. We have disposed of the caricature of the system as given in the manifesto, by showing that the principle which maintains that civil authority ought to be employed, and may in different ways be employed, in the advancement of religion, and for the good of the Church, does not justify the magistrate in failing to discriminate between truth and error,—invest him with eccle-

siastical power and supremacy over the Church,—or ascribe to him a lordship over the faith and consciences of men. Having done this, we have left nothing for the Christian Voluntaries to contend against. They may fight with the phantom of their own imagination as it pleases them, and hold it up before the eyes of the people that they may be roused to join them in their politico-religious crusade; but no one is attempting to defend what they characterise as the State Church system; and if there is no one who is intelligently acquainted with the principle of Establishments, who will not denounce the description given of it in the manifesto as a gross misrepresentation, assuredly there is no one who has any intelligent regard for the welfare of society, who will not denounce the opinions advocated in that document as flagrantly opposed to national religion. It is not possible for any man, who has a character for intelligence or integrity to maintain, to assert, with this document in his hand, that the United Presbyterians hold the great fundamental principles of national religion, and that their only opposition is to State Establishments of religion, the fact being, that these are the very principles which they repudiate and deny.

What do they lay down as the essential principle of their system? It is contained in these words—

“Nothing is more plainly taught throughout Scripture than that the obligations of religion lie *exclusively* between man and God, who claims an undivided and sovereign control over its institutions and acts.” God claims an undivided and sovereign control over the institutions and acts of religion. This, all will allow. But what has it to do with the question in hand? It is a protest against a Popish claim on the part of the Church as much as against an Erastian claim on the part of the State; and instead of condemning an alliance between Church and State, it rather seems to require and demand that both, being divine ordinances, should co-operate in subordination to God, each in its own way, in promoting the interests of true religion. But that the undivided and sovereign control of God over the institutions and acts of religion *excludes nations or men in their corporate capacity* from taking anything to do with their maintenance, is not only *not* plainly taught throughout Scripture, but Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, plainly teaches *the very opposite*.

The obligations of religion did not lie between God and Abraham, *merely as an individual*, but also as the father of a family and the head of a household. “The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty

nation, and *all the nations of the earth* shall be blessed in him? For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." The personal religion of Abraham did not relieve him from all obligation to use his means and influence, as the head of a great household, for its advancement among them. On the contrary, the way in which he acknowledged God's sovereign control over the acts and institutions of religion, was in seeking to bring the means of religious instruction within the reach of all under his jurisdiction; with the prayer, that, through God's blessing, they might be all brought under the power of the truth, and so, in their respective families and spheres of influence, exert themselves in furthering those institutions and acts of religion over which God has sovereign control. In like manner, as we learn from the second Psalm, the fact that Christ is seated as King in Zion, and controlling all its acts and institutions, instead of relieving kings and rulers, in their capacity as such, from using their authority in seeking the advancement of His kingdom among those over whom they are placed, is the very thing that lays upon them the strongest obligations to do it. "Be wise *now*, therefore, *O ye kings*; and be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear. . . . Kiss

ye the Son, lest He be angry." In Job it is said, "When He hideth His face, who then can behold Him? whether it be done against a *nation* or against a man only" (chap. xxxiv. 29). In Isaiah, "The *nation* and *kingdom* that will not serve the Church shall perish." Again, in Rev. xi. 15, we have one of the visions of John in Patmos:—"There were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." It is as *kingdoms* they are promised to Christ; and it is as *kingdoms* they are to become His. If so, then it is not the mere private and personal allegiance to Christ of the individuals comprising these kingdoms that is spoken of, but the publicly declared and national recognition of His authority, and countenancing of His Church and cause. "Their kings," says the late Dr M'Crie, "had formerly given their power to the beast; but now they should withdraw it, and employ it on the side of the Lamb." The undivided and sovereign control of Christ over the institutions and acts of religion, so far from being disowned or infringed, will never be more faithfully and truly recognised and honoured than in the days "when all kings (in their public and official capacity) shall fall down before Him, and all nations (as such) shall serve Him."

How any man, with the Word of God in his hand, not to say a professedly Christian Church, can deliberately record that the Holy Scriptures plainly teach, "throughout," that the obligations of religion do not lie upon *nations, as such*, is past comprehension. And yet this is what the United Presbyterian Church, through its committee, informs Christendom that it believes, when it declares that these "obligations lie *exclusively* between man (the individual man) and God." For they explain their meaning in the next sentence, in which they say—"All religion is voluntary, the free act of the individual dealing with God; and collective exercises are *genuine only* when the individuals uniting in them render to God *their personal* offerings and services." If this is the teaching of the Scripture, then certainly neither Churches, nor nations, nor families, can by any act of theirs violate any religious obligations, or incur any guilt, so as to expose themselves to divine judgments. The guilt, if incurred, must be incurred by the individual members of these bodies who are *exclusively*, according to this doctrine, the subjects of religious obligation; so that upon them individually, and not on the communities to which they respectively belong, must the punishment descend. But notwithstanding this dictum of Christian Voluntaryism, the Scriptures record God's dealings

with the seven Churches of Asia *as such*; and we find it recorded in the same Book—"Pour out Thy fury *on the nations* that know Thee not, and *upon the families* that call not on Thy name."

"Erroneous conceptions on this point," they tell us, "lie at the root of the State Church system." This matter may be perfectly true as they state the matter, but according to what they call erroneous conceptions of religious obligation, so understand we the Holy Scriptures, "believing all that is written in the law and the prophets" regarding the obligations resting upon individuals, families, Churches, and nations respectively, and as such, to know and serve God. Christian Voluntaryism must certainly have a fearfully blinding effect upon the minds of its votaries, when they can see nothing in Scripture from beginning to end but *individualism*. This is to lay the axe at the root of all society with a purpose, and to enlist Scripture against reason, and history, and itself. There is assuredly a radical error somewhere; but whether it be in the Establishment system, which is based upon the belief that the obligations of religion lie upon men in their relative and social capacity, as well as individually and personally; or in the Voluntary principle, which limits them to the latter, it may be safely left to an intelligent Christian public to decide. There can be very little

difficulty, with the Word of God in our hands, in determining whether the accuser or the accused in this manifesto invades the divine prerogative. All that we can say is, that we think the authors of the manifesto were right to confine themselves to the general statement—"plainly taught throughout Scripture"—without venturing to condescend upon particular portions of that authoritative record in support of their doctrine. In their blind zeal against the State Church system, they have recorded a sentiment of the real nature and bearings of which they do not seem to be fully aware.

We grant, indeed, that it cuts up the Establishment principle by the roots; but it cuts up a great deal more,—it cuts up all social worship, and all combined efforts for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; and thus, in aiming a fatal blow at the Establishment system, they unwittingly present us with a powerful argument in its defence. Their position is this, that the religious exercises and beliefs of a collective body are not genuine, and therefore not acceptable to God, except in so far as they are the personal services of the individuals composing it; and hence they conclude that Governments and Parliaments cannot vote any money for religion because it is not their personal property, nor adopt any confession except as the expression of the faith of the individuals composing

them. Now, if this proposition which they lay down is true, we must accept the conclusion deduced from it, and so surrender the Establishment principle. But we think it right to inform the authors of this document, that while there may be those who have implicit faith in their utterances, there are a *good many* more who will require something else than their assertion before they will give credit to such a revolutionary statement. Mark what it involves—" *Collective exercises are genuine ONLY when the individuals uniting in them render to God their personal offerings and services!*" If so, then, excepting the Day of Pentecost, we question if there has ever been an acceptable service rendered to God by *any collective* body of professing Christians. According to this dictum, no Church, *as such*, or in its corporate capacity, any more than a nation, *as such*, ever has rendered, or ever can render, acceptable service to God; for no Church ever has been, or ever will be, known in this world, all the individual members of which are truly and personally united to Christ. This is the natural and necessary consequence of the doctrine which limits the obligation to promote the cause and kingdom of Christ to the individual as contrasted with the State. This is just the *old* Voluntaryism, as Dr Cunningham used to explain it; but while we never could see what

warrant Voluntaries had, either from reason or Scripture, for making this limitation, we confess it did not appear to us such a vile and mischievous thing as it does when seen in the light of this manifesto.

Christian Voluntaryism reduces all society to individual units, with whom alone responsibility rests; the Establishment principle, on the other hand, while clearly acknowledging, duly recognising, and carefully providing against any violation of the personal responsibility to God of the individual members of society, considers that society, as such, is responsible for its publicly-declared belief and public action, as much as individuals for theirs. It is referred to by Dr C. J. Brown in his work on Establishments, which is deserving of careful study by himself and others in these perilous times. He says, "The union of men in society does not set them free from the moral law—a *society being in fact a moral person*, whose will is the result of the united wills of the individuals, and so remains subject to the same moral law which binds the individuals. Hence arise those great duties which independent nations owe to each other," and, we may add, which the State owes to the Church. "The simple fact," says Dr Brown, "that the Church, like the State, is a society constituted for certain important ends, upon principles legitimate and approved of God, lays the

State under obligations to give to the Church whatever she stands in need of, and which the State can give without sacrificing its own welfare. In *this case*, just as in that of independent *nations*, there is a *reciprocal obligation* of the *same nature* as exists among individual persons.”\* How does this comport with the individualism of the United Presbyterian manifesto?

But this United Presbyterian dictum goes further still, even to the disallowing of all creeds and public religious worship. This doctrine of theirs, they tell us, necessarily implies that national endowment and legal creeds are valueless, except as expressions of the piety of their authors—they are wanting in “the vital element of voluntary adhesion” (?) as regards any subsequent period in the nation’s history. This, as coming from those who are the professed descendants of the men who held by the perpetual obligation of the covenants, reads a solemn and impressive lesson to all churches that begin to step aside from the right path. Once enter on a course of defection, and there is no depth too low into which a Church may not plunge: a course of defection is like the first step in a precipitous incline. According to the doctrine here propounded, a nation is not bound by its promises to the Church, or by its religious beliefs. The individual mem-

\* “Church Establishments Defended,” pp. 76, 77.

bers of the Legislature that sanctioned them may be bound, but not the nation; for, according to this manifesto, the nation, *as such*, never did, and never could, come under any obligations of the kind. This is strange doctrine! We presume that even Christian Voluntaries will allow that the nation would be honourably bound to settle the Alabama Claims, though the present Government, who agreed to the settlement, should cease to exist to-morrow, and that, too, notwithstanding that the nation, as such, was never consulted, and three-fourths of the people consider them unjust. And why, in such circumstances, should this be accepted as a national debt which we are honourably bound to discharge? Why should it not be devolved upon the individual members of the Government that acknowledged the claims? Surely, if this Voluntary principle is right, the nation, as such, can no more be bound by the action of its rulers to make payment to America than to the Church. Would it be a just ground for refusing to implement the engagement to allege that the nation did not, and could not, come under it, and that America must look to the individual members of the Cabinet for payment? On what principle, then, except that of hostility to national religion, can such ground be assumed with regard to endowments to the Church? There is nothing in the nature of things to account

for the transaction being *national* in the one case more than in the other. And Christendom demands, at the instance of these Christian Voluntaries, that they show on what ground of reason or Scripture they maintain that a nation in its national capacity can act through its representatives in dealing with the kingdoms of this world so as to feel the burden of *national responsibility*, while it cannot so act toward the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. How is it that all obligations come under to the Church on the part of the rulers in their official capacity are valueless, except as the expression of their own piety; while obligations of like kind come under to any individual, or corporation, or nation, are of value as the expression of the national mind? This is what we wish to know; and until we have got a satisfactory answer, we must hold this United Presbyterian principle as sapping the foundations of all national responsibility. Here let us say, in passing, that it is a misnomer for a United Presbyterian to speak of "*national* endowments." According to them they are the mere gifts of the individuals, which the nation, as such, repudiates; and it will remain, therefore, according to them, with the Church to find out as best it can the heirs and *singular* successors of the original donors, and institute a process against them for the

continued payment of their ancestors' pious gifts, when the nation shall have resolved that the endowments which, as a nation, *they never gave* shall cease and determine, and be *appropriated*, nevertheless, by the nation to its own purposes !

Having disposed of their principle in its bearings on national endowments and national honour, we shall see what it involves when applied to what they call "legal creeds"—that is, the creed of the Church to which the nation has given its solemn sanction, as in its judgment in accordance with the mind of God as revealed in His Word. For the civil magistrate to do such a thing is, of course, in the opinion of Christian Voluntaries, incompetent and sinful, as it implies his right and power to distinguish between truth and error. But, right or wrong, it is an undoubted fact that he has done this thing, and the creed to which he has given his sanction is a so-called "*legal* creed." This creed, though adopted by Act of Parliament, and, as the manifesto says, "fixed by statute," expresses, according to them, no more, at the outside, than the faith of the enacting Parliament. This happy thought notwithstanding, it is somewhat awkward for the United Presbyterians that the Act ratifying the creed should have a place upon the statute-book, so that its claim to be regarded as a *national* Act is as valid as that of the Act for

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abolishing the Annuity-tax. In these circumstances, we presume, the authors of this manifesto, while resolved to do all in their power to have this, and every similar Act, blotted out of the statute-book, will meanwhile comfort themselves with their distinctly recorded protest against it as "religion by proxy." According to this theory, however, it must equally be denounced as *worship by proxy* for one man to lead the devotions of a congregation, all the members of which are not themselves true and devout worshippers of Him who will be worshipped in spirit and truth.

Further, they maintain that this, and all legal creeds fixed by statute centuries ago, cease to be of any value "as continued testimonies." This, of course, must apply to all creeds, whether fixed by the Church or by statute; they must cease after centuries, according to the authors of the manifesto, yea, after years or months (you cannot fix the time), to be of any value as testimonies. They are monuments for the dead, but not embodiments of truth for the living. All this manifestly points in the direction of the necessity of periodic (annual, it may be) revisions of our Confession; as, what was *the very truth of God* to our fathers may have ceased to be so to their children in a *progressive* age. But it points far further, even to the discarding of all creeds and confessions together, and, in

course of time, of the Bible itself, as a certain rule of faith. Such is the progress of the age—such the tendency of events in our days! And the State Church system, as the counteraction of all this, instead of invading the rights of God, upholds and vindicates them.

Having dwelt at length on the essential nature and true bearing of the manifesto as brought out in the attempt to defend the divine rights against the State Church system, we shall do little more than allude to what they say about its *invading the divine province*. “Authority in matters of religion,” they tell us, “includes authority both over conscience and over the Church,” and this is only competent to God. Now, in the first place, the Establishment principle does not invest the magistrate with authority *in* matters of religion; it limits his authority to matters *about* religion. We are quite aware of the fact that Voluntaries either cannot or will not distinguish between a power *in sacris*, which the Scripture denies, and a power *circa sacra*, which the Scripture allows to the magistrate. However they may confound these things, the distinction is all-important. It has been shown, times without number, that there are many ways in which civil authority may be lawfully and beneficially employed about religion and the kingdom of Christ. After enumerating a number

of ways, the late Dr M'Crie says—"These, with other things of a similar kind, . . . civil rulers may do, in the *exercise of their authority*, without encroaching upon the office or business of the Church and its office-bearers, without compelling their subjects to believe or practise what they do not believe or judge sinful, and without punishing persons who may conscientiously dissent from the authorised and established religion, or depriving them of their natural rights merely on this ground; while, at the same time, by using their authority in this way, magistrates do act for the honour of Him by whom they rule, for the promotion of religion, the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and the public good of their subjects."\*

To talk of the State Church system as thrusting human government into the place of the divine, fixing for a man the creed he is to believe, or the worship he is to render, authorising obedience to the divine law and such like, as is done in this manifesto, is obstinate and wilful perversity. It is easy to launch against a system reckless and unfounded charges, which not only cannot be established, but which have been conclusively refuted again and again. But though it may be easy to do so, it may be far from honourable. We do not mean here to reproduce the answers to those

\* "Statement," &c., p. 83. New Edition.

charges which will be found in almost every work that treats on the subject, and in none more fully or conclusively than in the "Statement" by Dr M'Crie; we content ourselves at present with a smile at their ignorance and a flat denial of their charges, only asking, in reference to one clause—in which they say, "God cannot confer on magistrates the power of interference between Him and His worshippers,"—Has God conferred such a power upon the Church? and if not, then their reasoning applies equally to ecclesiastical as to magisterial authority. But though this specific power has not been conferred either on the nation or the Church, they may have, and they actually have had, powers conferred on them, which they are required mutually and respectively to put forth for the good of the people, under a due sense of responsibility to God, who conferred them.

The Establishment principle, by maintaining that magistrates ought to give their sanction to the laws of Christ, and to enact laws in favour of His cause and kingdom, instead of being chargeable with encouraging any encroachment on the divine prerogative, upholds and vindicates it, by requiring of them to acknowledge and pay homage to that authority. It was surely no invasion of the divine prerogative for Cyrus to issue a command enforcing the commandment of the God of Israel

to build him a house at Jerusalem. This was just an illustration of the Establishment principle ; and the man who acted upon it, instead of being blameworthy, as an invader of the divine prerogative, as—according to the principle laid down in this manifesto—he must have been, is deserving of commendation and imitation, as manifesting becoming submission to the divine command, and paying due honour to the God of Israel and His institutions. It must, in the eyes of Christian Voluntaries, have been an awful act of treachery on the part of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and the rest of the chiefs of the fathers of Israel, to build unto the Lord God of Israel, *as King Cyrus*, the King of Persia, *commanded* them (Ezra iv. 3). And it was nothing short of giving the *divine sanction* to what Christian Voluntaries would term an unlawful blending of the civil and sacred, and so *to an invasion of the divine prerogative*, for the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to strengthen the hands of the elders of Israel in building, in obedience to a magistratical command, sanctioning a divine command, or to the divine command sanctioned by magistratical authority, as we find they did from Ezra vi. 14,—“ They prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo ; and they builded and finished it according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment

of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia." This, according to Christian Voluntarism, was an unscriptural and unholy alliance and conspiracy against God and His kingdom ; while, according to the Church State system, it is a scriptural illustration of that harmonious action between Church and State, in promoting the kingdom of Christ, which ought ever to prevail for the glory of God and the true wellbeing of man.

As to the bearing of the system on *toleration*, all depends on what is to be understood by toleration. There is such a thing as toleration which amounts to unlimited licence—such as prevailed in Israel when there was no king, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. This is the kind of toleration that seems to be demanded in the present day, and which our rulers seem disposed to concede ; but instead of being sanctioned or approved, it is condemned in the Word of God, and will be refused in any nation that has a concern for its self-preservation. How far this is the kind of toleration the authors of the manifesto demand, it is not for us to say ; but we emphatically deny that the State Church system does of necessity deprive any sect of the liberty or toleration to which it can rightfully lay claim, according to the Word of God and the laws which ought to regulate every well-constituted State.

In connection with this matter, we cannot help expressing astonishment at the Christian Voluntaries quoting Andrew Melville's famous words to King James, about two kings and two kingdoms, in support of their views of toleration. The name of Andrew Melville mixed up with a Voluntary manifesto! What will men not do? Had Andrew Melville any one thing in common with the authors of this manifesto, if we except his humanity? And why the authors of this manifesto, when condemning the State Church system as opposed in their judgment to scriptural toleration, should introduce one of the noblest and ablest champions of that system, as though he was at one with them in their views concerning its nature and tendency, we are at a loss to understand, unless they mean to insult the memory of this great man.

## IV.

### THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE.

(2.) *The State Church system violates the rights of conscience.*—This is the second general principle of Scripture regarding the nature of religion and the Church which is applied as a test to the system to prove it unscriptural. Here, as throughout the manifesto, there is no lack of assertion and confounding of things that differ; but there is such a lamentable want of reason and proof, that it is extremely difficult to deal with it. We have disposed of the charge brought against the system as necessarily *invading the divine prerogative*; and we found that the principle laid down in the manifesto, on which the attempt is made to substantiate the charge, is naturally and necessarily subversive of all religion, and therefore itself the most daring invasion of *the prerogative and province of God*.

Conscience has always been the citadel in which Voluntaryism has sought to entrench itself. It is truly a sacred—we should say, an impregnable—fortress. And on this very account it attracts the attention of men. It has been resorted to by all kinds of men, from the days of Adam till now.

The prophets of Baal could plead conscience as well as the holy apostles and martyrs of Jesus Christ. It was at the professed dictate of conscience that the High Priest pronounced sentence of death against the Lord of conscience. There have been as many dark deeds of villany perpetrated under the guise of conscience, as there have been noble sacrifices to the cause of truth laid upon its altar. All men, not excluding Christian Voluntaries, have got consciences of some kind; and it is not at all wonderful that conscience should occupy a prominent place in the Voluntary manifesto. But it is a little too much for the defenders of a system which robs the nation of its conscience to think to get the credit of having enriched themselves by the spoil. They do not hold the monopoly of conscience, whatever their language may seem to indicate. Weakness of argument requires might of assertion. It is an old advice, "No case, abuse the attorney." This may deceive the ignorant and unwary, but it cannot carry conviction. And the authors of the manifesto must support their plea of conscience in a very different way from what is done in this document, if they would expect an intelligent public to have any respect for it. Conscience was a sufficient rule for man before sin entered the world. Since the entrance of sin, however, the old rule of conscience is no certain or infallible rule of direc-

tion for man. Another rule has been given by the Lord of conscience, and it is only as a man can prove that he is following the dictates of a conscience which is enlightened by the Word of God, that he has ground to expect that his convictions will be respected. Many a good man has urged a plea of conscience which could only be accepted, if it was to be accepted at all, at the expense of his understanding.

In regard to *the rights of conscience*.—In anew lifting up this cry for toleration and liberty of conscience, the authors of this manifesto must be reminded of the weighty utterances of a man whose memory is held in deserved esteem by every lover of truth and his country, and in expelling whom from their body, their forefathers covered themselves and their principles with merited suspicion and disgrace. We speak of the late Dr M'Crie, who says in the "Statement," p. 211—

"If the grand enemy of the Church cannot carry the citadel by force, he will attempt it by negotiation; will commence as the herald of *toleration* and *liberty of conscience*, and persuade Christians to demolish those outworks by which their privileges were guarded; to remove all external barriers and restraints, and grant the same free scope and countenance to his kingdom in its various forms of infidelity, idolatry, superstition, damnable errors, and delusions, that are granted to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. It is the masterpiece of his art to prevail upon the friends of religion, *with whatever views*, to promote the same design with the emissaries of anti-Christ and the apostles of infidelity."

The position taken up in this manifesto with regard to toleration and the rights of conscience is the very same with that of the Voluntaries in the end of last century and during the Voluntary controversy. The Christian Voluntaries of the present day have not departed a hair's-breadth from the old position of their degenerate ancestors. Toleration and liberty of conscience is a very convenient and effective rallying cry. But the attempt to show that they are violated by the State Church system is utterly visionary and baseless, proceeding as it does on ignorance of the just rights of conscience, and on an extraordinary confusion of ideas as to what constitutes a real violation of these rights. It has been the same from the beginning, and will continue, we fear, to the end. In this question of national religion, Voluntaries do not seem to be capable of distinguishing things that differ; and until they can be got to do this, it is vain to think of reasoning with *them*.

What really lies at the root of all their mystification regarding toleration and liberty of conscience is a thorough and unaccountable misunderstanding of the terms *persecution*, *intolerance*, and *compulsion*, as if they were all equally applicable to every exercise of magistratical power about religion, and were all equally objectionable and unscriptural. Compulsory principles in religion

are, according to the authors of this manifesto, just the more recent form of persecution—a form of persecution better adapted to the enlightenment of this age of progress than the stake and the scaffold of a less refined period. The light of the nineteenth century has so far dissipated the old views of toleration, that the State Church system has been compelled to let go its hold of the *throats* of Dissenters, and to confine itself to ranging their *pockets*; so we understand from the manifesto, when it tells us, that in now attempting to secure conformity, the milder form of *the fine* has been substituted for the coarser, and on the whole, we presume, less agreeable form of *the scaffold*. The system, they say, “remains true, as far as it dares, to what lies at the root of all, *compulsory principles in religion*.” It is in not distinguishing between what is here said to lie at the root of the State Church system from the *intolerant and persecuting principles* which lie at the root of Voluntaryism, that the advocates of the latter are led to talk as they do about the former violating the rights of conscience.

We allow that the power of the magistrate is compulsive. “There is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God.” But he has been armed with this power by God for the advancement of His glory in the highest good of the

people. His power is not absolute, uncontrolled, and irresponsible. On the contrary, "he is the *minister* of God to thee," says the apostle, "for good." These words point to an end at which the magistrate must always aim in the exercise of his power, even the good of his people; and they also indicate the manner in which, and the rule according to which, he is to put forth his power—viz., under a sense of responsibility to, and in accordance with the revealed will of Him, whose *servant* he is. These things are either not known or lost sight of by those who speak of the magistrate's power about religion as involving persecution.

"It is," says Burroughs, "the dictate of nature, that the magistrate should have some power in matters of religion. . . . The heathens would never suffer their gods to be blasphemed, but punished such as were guilty thereof by the power of the magistrate. . . . That magistrates have nothing to do with religion is abhorrent to nature. Is it not an abhorrent thing to any man's heart in the world, that men suffer that God to be blasphemed whom they honour; and that nothing should be done for the restraining any, *but to ask them why they do so, and to persuade them to do otherwise?* We were in a most miserable condition if we had no external civil power to restrain from *any kind* of blasphemies and seducements. . . . If there were a company of madmen running up and down the streets with knives and swords in their hands, endeavouring to work mischief and kill all they met with, and we must do nothing to restrain them; if we could persuade them to do otherwise, well and good, but if that were all we could do for help, what a dangerous thing were this? The case is the same when those who are mad with

damnable heresies run from place to place *seeking to draw all they can from the truth*. If we have no means of helping but argument (church discipline does not reach *them*), it is ill with us. Surely God has not put His people into such a sad condition as this is. He has provided better for them than this.”\*

We should rather think so. It is this which the Establishment principle or the State Church system asserts and maintains, when it declares that the magistrate is the keeper of the *first* as well as the *second* table of the law; in other words, that he is bound to put forth his compulsive power to promote “godliness” as well as “honesty,” and to punish as *crimes* those actions which openly profane God and His worship. Do the Christian Voluntaries agree with this? If so, then their charge of intolerance and persecution, and their plea from conscience against the State Church system, fall to the ground. It cannot in such a case be against the *system itself*, or the compulsory power of the magistrate about matters of religion, that they take exception, but against some abuse of that system *real* or *imaginary*, in the removal of which, if *real*, the controversy would take end. But if they do not agree with the principle just laid down, they manifestly place themselves in an attitude of hostility to a principle that lies at the

\* “*Irenicum*,” p. 23.

foundation of all right government, whether viewed in the light of *natural* or *revealed* religion.

That the authors of the manifesto do assume this responsibility, by denying that religious matters fall within the province of the civil magistrate, is undoubted, when they state that "the first duty owed to God by rulers is to leave the religious life, individual and collective, a free course, and its entire sphere inviolate to the Divine Sovereign." This is the ground on which they assert their claim to toleration and liberty of conscience, as against the State Church system. It is the very ground taken up by the Seceders in the end of last century, when they adopted new light or Voluntary principles, as it is thus expressed in their new testimony:—"A liberty of worshipping God in the way which they judge agreeable to His will is a right common to all men. They may, and often do, err and offend the most High God, by substituting a false worship in the place of that which He requires; *but no power on earth may take their right from them.*" For the magistrate, therefore, according to Voluntary principles, as thus laid down, to interpose his authority and power about religion, in any other way, or to any other effect, than to secure for all men *individually* and *collectively* the undisturbed possession of "the right to judge for themselves," and "to give effect to convictions," is to

violate the rights of conscience! The liberty of conscience to which the manifesto lays claims "includes the liberty of worship, and of acting by persuasion on other minds—the whole liberty required for the free exercise of religious life, whether in its individual or associated acts." This, according to United Presbyterians, "lies at the foundation of national liberty and wellbeing." We should rather be disposed to say that *it aims* "at the foundation of national liberty and wellbeing," neither of which can possibly consist with the triumph of such principles. *Unlimited licence*, not true and rightly regulated liberty, *is what is contended for in this claim*. For, however the insertion of the clause, "subject to the Lord of conscience and the just order of society," may be intended, or may appear to the authors of the manifesto, to guard their doctrine against this charge, they do not in reality avail for such a purpose. For, if "the just order of society" falls under the care of the civil magistrate, *it must be his right and duty* to ascertain how far the principles and practices of individuals and societies are consistent with that order, and to punish and restrain "all departures from order in the name of religion," notwithstanding that the advocates of them may judge them most agreeable to the will of God, and such as they are bound in conscience to publish and main-

tain. Would this be no violation of the rights of conscience according to the manifesto? The authors of this manifesto, therefore, must either give up their principle that the magistrate is "to leave the religious life, individual and collective, a *free* course," and adopt the Establishment principle, which maintains that the religious life of the subject does fall under the care of the magistrate, and is not *absolutely* beyond his control; or else be held chargeable with propagating principles of Socialism, which are the bane of society; and so rendering themselves amenable to the power of the civil magistrate as the guardian of the right order of society.

If it is admitted that the magistrate is the proper judge of what may be necessary for the welfare of society, and what may violate its "just order," this is just what we contend for when we maintain that matters affecting the religious life of individuals and societies must in the very nature of things fall under the care of the civil magistrate. This we consider not only consistent with the rights of conscience, but to be absolutely necessary to the maintenance of these rights in any community. If this is *not* what the authors of the manifesto mean to concede to the magistrate when they speak of his limiting his *restraint* to departures from the just order of society in the name of religion, their

allusion to the "just order of society" is a deception; and they actually deny to him all magistratical authority, and so snap asunder the very bonds of society. But if they *do* mean to concede the magistrate's right to judge as to what accords with the just order of society, then *they give up the whole case* as regards their doctrine of toleration and liberty of conscience. Of course, we hold that the magistrate, in judging of what is for the good order of the community, must do so as a "minister of God," and under a sense of responsibility to Him; and, in doing this, he must exert his authority on behalf of those religious opinions and practices which he judges for the good of society, while he refuses to countenance those which he judges to be injurious to its best interests, however conscientiously they may be held by their advocates. By Voluntaries the exercise of this power would be deemed persecution for conscience' sake, no matter how judiciously it might be put forth, nor how much in accordance with Scripture or even the general belief of the community. The magistrate, in the exercise of the right, *professedly* conceded to him by the authors of the manifesto, of judging what is for the "just order of society," would, *in the case supposed*, violate, according to them, the right which these individuals have to think and *give effect* to convictions in religious matters. So much for the

logical consistency of a document which has been issued by a committee of which the Rev. Dr Cairns is a member!

We believe the doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, chap. xx. 2, "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith and worship." But how this gives any countenance to the opinion of Christian Voluntaries, that the magistrate has no power in matters affecting the religious life of men, individually or collectively, it is very difficult for any but themselves to discover. That the section has no special and immediate reference to the power of the magistrate must be apparent to all who read it to the end. And that this was not the doctrine maintained by the compilers appears from the 4th section of this chapter. The doctrine that "God is the Lord of the conscience" leaves it as free from the commands of *parents and the Church* in the matters stated, as from those of the civil magistrate. And the question therefore is, if it be competent for parents and the Church *in their way* to exercise authority in matters of religion without violating the rights of conscience, may this not be equally competent to the civil magistrate *in his way* and manner? Is there no duty devolved

on him in regard to those all-important matters of religion, which engage the attention of parents and Churches? Are parents, and masters, and Churches the only parties that are charged with responsibility in matters affecting the consciences of men? And is the magistrate, under whose jurisdiction these parties and those subject to them are, *excluded* from taking to do with such matters, because of the sacredness of the rights of conscience? Is he to be the only man that is to have no authority in matters that so inevitably mould the destiny of the empire over which he holds sway? Is he to be the mere blind and irresponsible recorder and enforcer of what is called public opinion? Is there such a thing as civil *authority*? It would seem as if this were called in question; and as if because the people determine the *form* of the government, God were not the fountain of civil government itself; as if the rulers were the representatives of the people in such sense as that they are rather to be ruled by the people than to rule them, under a sense of responsibility to God! And hence the demagogue cry—*The people are the nation!* which with some settles all questions, when it is meant to unsettle all existing institutions. All the power, and the right, and the conscience are with the people; so that it will not do for the ruler to put forth his power

and authority, under a sense of responsibility to God, in the way of enforcing His commands—as, for example, the law of the Sabbath—however manifestly, in his judgment, their violation may endanger the welfare of society, should an infidel section of the people judge otherwise!

According to this doctrine, the only man in the community who is to have no conscience is the magistrate. Now it so happens, as a matter of fact, that God, the Lord of conscience, has given a conscience to the magistrate as well as to the people, which is of exactly the same nature as the consciences of those over whom he is placed, and therefore it is no more subject to the commandments of the people in matters of faith and worship than are theirs to his. And it is no more competent to him to lay his conscience aside when he assumes the office of a magistrate, than for any of his subjects when they become parents or ecclesiastical rulers. He is under as heavy a responsibility as any of them, to use his authority and power so as neither to violate *his own conscience* nor the *consciences of those who are subject to him*. The magistrate, says the Apostle Peter, is “sent by God for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with *well-doing* he may *put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*. As free, and not

using liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the *servant of God*." He is no less solemnly bound under a sense of responsibility to Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, to use his *liberty* as a servant of God for the good of his subjects, than are parents, or masters, or the rulers of the Church to use theirs for the good of those committed to their care. It will not do to thrust in the rights of conscience between him and the discharge of his duty, as is done by the authors of the manifesto when they say, "Society was made for man, and not man for society; and the right to obey God precedes the obligation to obey man." If society was made for man, it was made for him as a religious being; and it is only as the interests of religion are promoted that its real stability can be maintained. It must therefore be the duty of rulers, who are the guardians of these interests, to look to its religious welfare, and to see to it that the people do not pretend their right to obey God as a reason for their neglecting to obey him, when faithfully endeavouring to advance the highest good of the community.

The claim on which we are commenting reaches a great deal further than the authors of the manifesto seem to be aware. "We ought to obey God rather than man," for example, points to an obligation equally resting upon us, and equally

pertinent as a reply to the magistrate, should he command anything that is contrary to sound morals or the duties of the second table of the law, as it would be, should he act thus in regard to religion or the duties of the first table of the law. If therefore the lordship of God over the conscience sets aside all *compulsive* power of the magistrate about matters of religion, it must do so equally as regards matters of morality—which were to leave him without a sphere of action at all. This would prove, not indeed the inconsistency of the Confession with itself merely, but the inconsistency of the divine ordinance of the magistracy with the constitution which God has given us. Such is the necessary, dangerous, and revolutionary consequence of the Voluntary principle as laid down in the manifesto.

## V.

### THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE—(*continued.*)

IN adducing conscience, the authors of this manifesto were bound to produce conclusive evidence of its enlightenment from the Word of God before they could expect its claims to be acknowledged. Instead of this, they lay down principles which we have shown to be not only not educed from Scripture, but to be utterly subversive of all government—civil, ecclesiastical, and domestic. The only allusion to Scripture is to the case of Peter and James (Acts xii.), which proves that the power of the magistrate may be *grossly abused* for purposes of intolerance and persecution. Everybody knows that; and we all know that ecclesiastical and all power, not excluding that of church managers, is liable to abuse in the hands of erring mortals. This incident in apostolic history proves that the conscience of Herod was *unenlightened*, else he never would have acted toward the apostles as he did; and the reference to it in this manifesto proves that the consciences of Christian Voluntaries are

also *unenlightened*, else they never would have produced it as evidence that *all* magistratical power about religion involves persecution and a violation of the rights of conscience. The thing is monstrous—condemned alike by the light of nature and revelation. The magistrate cannot but take to do with matters of conscience, as we have seen, if he is to rule over *men*, who have consciences.

The magistrate cannot possibly confine himself to the “secular affairs of communities,” to the exclusion of religion. If so, then there *must be a way* in which he can put forth his influence and power in behalf of religion without necessarily interfering with the rights of *enlightened* consciences. “‘Let us begin with God,’ is a maxim,” says Dr M’Crie, “applicable to the formation of civil society and laws, as well as to other important undertakings. Men are not to *herd together* like a number of cattle, making provision merely for their external protection, accommodation, and order, forgetting the God that is above. A constitution which did not recognise religion, nor make any provision for its maintenance and defence, would be, in so far, an atheistical constitution.”\* And yet this is the very thing which Christian Voluntaries would bring about, when they maintain that the rights of conscience demand that “civil legislation

\* “Statement,” &c., p. 114.

ought not to extend beyond the outward and secular affairs of communities." Thus, strange to say, the *rights of that very faculty* which constitutes man a responsible being, and exalts him infinitely above the beasts that perish, *demand of him* that the social constitution should be so framed as to make no further provision for him than if he had no higher nature or destiny than the brutes! This may be Voluntaryism; it is certainly not Scripture. If there is one thing more clearly revealed in Scripture than another, it is that God deals with nations as such, holding them responsible for national action. As Dr M'Crie expresses it—"Nations and kingdoms, in their corporate and public capacity, are *under the moral government of God*, capable of the obligations of the moral law, and bound to do homage to Him, and promote His worship." This was the view held by all the Reformers, and it is embodied in all the Reformed Confessions. This is *the Establishment principle*, the faithful maintenance and right application and administration of which afford the only security, under God, for the possession and enjoyment by any nation of its civil and religious rights and liberties, and the only true and Scriptural acknowledgment of Christ as King of Nations.

This was the principle held by Andrew Melville, whose name and famous utterance the authors of

the manifesto so shamelessly introduce, as though he had any sympathy with, or gave any countenance to them in their views of toleration and liberty of conscience. He thus expresses himself on this subject, in the Second Book of Discipline, chap. x. :—

“It pertains to the office of a Christian magistrate to assist and fortify the godly proceedings of the Kirk in all behalfs; and, namely, to see that the public estate and ministry thereof be maintained and sustained, as it appertains, according to God’s Word. . . . To assist and maintain the discipline of the Kirk, and punish them civilly that will not obey the censure of the same, without confounding always the one jurisdiction with the other. . . . Not to suffer the patrimony of the Kirk to be applied to profane and unlawful uses. . . . To make laws and constitutions, agreeable to the Word of God, for advancement of the Kirk, and policy thereof, without usurping anything that pertains not to the civil sword, but belongs to the offices that are merely ecclesiastical, as is the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, using ecclesiastical discipline, and the *spiritual execution* thereof, or any part of the power of the spiritual keys, which our Master gave to the Apostles, and to their true successors.”

What could this man, who thus expressed himself, mean when he spoke of two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland? There is only one answer can possibly be given to such a question. And to quote his words as if they gave the sanction of Andrew Melville to the opinion of the authors of the manifesto, that “civil legislation ought not to extend beyond the outward and secular affairs of communities,” and that the magistrate ought to do no

more for the true Church than a false one, is something worse than an act of flagrant injustice.

The Westminster Confession of Faith embodies the very same principle, in chap. xxiii., sec. 3 :—  
“The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and Sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; yet he *hath authority*, and it is *his duty*, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church ; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire ; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God *duly settled*, administered, and observed.”

Dr Cunningham says—

“The true, real, and intended import of the passage is just to declare the great fundamental principle of national establishments of religion, viz., that the civil magistrate is bound to exercise his lawful authority in civil things, with a view to the promotion of the interests of religion and the welfare of the Church of Christ, and for the purpose of securing these great results.”\*

This doctrine was also faithfully held by the fathers of the Secession, as it is still by their genuine descendants, however it may be treated by their degenerate offspring. And the men who charge this doctrine, and the Confession of Faith which embodies it, with favouring persecution for

\* “Discussions on Church Principles,” p. 222.

conscience' sake, take upon themselves a very grave responsibility. They do nothing less than pronounce a sentence of condemnation against the creed of every Reformed Church, against their own progenitors, and against all the most godly, intelligent, and strenuous defenders of the rights of conscience and the true liberties of men, both civil and religious, that this world ever saw. One would have thought that men would have trembled before adopting principles which necessitate the assumption of such an attitude toward the very men to whom, under God, we owe all those civil and religious rights and privileges which so honourably distinguish us among the nations. It is possible they did tremble, before propagating principles which go to overthrow the constitution under whose shelter it is that they enjoy the liberty of thought and action which they so recklessly and sinfully abuse. The consequences, at least, were fully present to the minds of those who first introduced them into the Secession Church. For we find Dr Lawson, of Selkirk, in his "Considerations on the Overture" respecting the adoption of Voluntary principles by the Synod, at p. 47, saying, among other strange things, "The truth of the matter seems to be this: the greater part of us detest compulsion in matters of religion, and have been extremely unwilling to

believe that there is anything in our venerable Standards which gives the least countenance to it. Perhaps we have too obstinately shut our eyes to the light from an excess of veneration for our fathers [no one will charge the Christian Voluntaries with that!] or *an unwillingness to cut ourselves off from every body of Presbyterians in the kingdom.*" In adopting the principles of Christian Voluntarism they deliberately and of purpose separated themselves from every Presbyterian Church.

As to their separating themselves from the fathers of the Secession, in the law papers in the Perth case, presented to the House of Lords after the adoption of Voluntary principles, they say, "Mr Erskine and his adherents were Presbyterians of the sixteenth century, *rigid and intolerant*;" and we find it stated thus, in the Reply of the Dissenters to Dr Candlish's Friendly Address in 1841, p. 8:—"As to our fathers of the Secession," they say, "whom you as well as we hold in honour, it is true they did not leave the Church because it was established and endowed; they did not become Seceders that they might be Voluntaries. . . . *We dare not now return to the views of 1732.*" It is well to know the exact position which the defenders of the rights of conscience as against the Establishment principle occupy. It is one of *isolation*, we may say, *from Christendom.* This of

itself does not condemn them, by any means, but it demands that their principles be not hastily and without most deliberate consideration adopted by any.

The authors of the manifesto maintain that the Confession of Faith is inconsistent with itself, because it declares in chapter xxiii. that the magistrate "hath authority, and it is his duty to take order . . . that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed," &c., while in chapter xx. it asserts that "God alone is Lord of the conscience." If so, we can only say it is very unaccountable. It has often been said, by way of apology for the compilers of the Confession—as if they required it!—that the principles of toleration were not so well understood in those days as now. But we never before heard it alleged that that Assembly of great and good men were wanting in logical power and discrimination. This certainly was not a prevailing defect among theologians of that period. This discovery, however, has been made by a Committee of the United Presbyterian Church in this nineteenth century! And they judge it for the interests of truth, and for the good of Scotland, that it should be made known that the Confession of Faith asserts in the 20th chapter what it contradicts in the 23rd! Before launching forth this charge of inconsistency against the Confession, it might have been more prudent for the

New Lights of this century to have suspected their own judgments, and so avoided exposing themselves to the reproach of being incapable of distinguishing things that differ, or of fathering their misconceptions upon others. It never seems to have occurred to the authors of the manifesto that the alleged inconsistency is not in the Confession with itself, but in their own views of the rights of conscience with those of the Westminster divines. For whereas these men maintained that God, as Lord of the conscience, requires of magistrates, in seeking the good of the community, to use their authority in advancing the welfare of the Church, and in suppressing all blasphemy and heresy that in any way endanger the just order of society; they (the authors of this document) hold that the exercise of such authority on the part of the magistrate is a violation of the rights of conscience. It will not do for them to father their ideas of the rights of conscience upon the compilers of the Confession, and then charge the Confession with inconsistency, because they cannot reconcile their own ideas with what is stated about the power of the civil magistrate in said Confession. They were bound in all honesty, if they were to subject one portion of the Confession to the test of another portion, to have done it fairly; and to have shown, if they could, that the views expressed in the 4th section of the

20th chapter, regarding the limits which God, as the Lord of conscience, has set to its rights and liberty, are inconsistent with the power ascribed to the civil magistrate in the 23rd chapter.

Certainly, whatever men may think of the doctrine announced in the chapter on "Liberty of Conscience," regarding the right of the magistrate to proceed against those who, on pretence of Christian liberty, publish opinions contrary to the light of nature, &c., there is no man, or body of men, who can lay any claim to reason or conscience, entitled to say that the doctrine that "God alone is Lord of the conscience," *as maintained in the Confession*, is inconsistent with the power assigned to the civil magistrate in the 23rd chapter. The authors of the manifesto cannot possibly urge the plea of ignorance in extenuation of the charge of gross unfairness to which they have laid themselves open.

In dealing with the rights of conscience, as affected by the Establishment principle, it is with the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, as set forth in chap. xx., sec. 4, of the Confession, that we have chiefly to do. It is commonly alleged that the Confession in this section teaches persecution, by declaring that parties "may be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church, and by the power of the civil magistrate," "for publishing

such opinions as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity." "It is not the design of this paragraph," says Dr M'Crie, "to state the objects of Church censure or civil prosecution: its proper and professed object is to interpose *a check on the abuse of liberty of conscience*, as operating to the prejudice of just and lawful authority."

The Rev. Dr Goold, however, came two years ago to be so clearly convinced that the position laid down in these words is "obviously at variance with the rights of conscience and the law of Christ," that, in the paroxysm of his grief, he falls down as a Reformed Presbyterian, and cries, "Am I asking too much if I humble myself at the bar of Scottish Presbyterianism, and implore protection against the outrage on conscience which would require an unqualified subscription" \* to these clauses? Who asks him to subscribe these clauses, or any other clauses, unless he believes them? He suggests, as what would meet his conscience, that the last words, "by the power of the civil magistrate," be omitted. We presume he has amended his subscription in some way since the date referred to, and saved his conscience. But we can only say that, however his conscience might be relieved by the proposed omission, it would be at the expense

\* Letter in *Daily Review*, 1st Nov. 1870.

of the Confession, of the truth, and of the consciences of all sound and intelligent Calvinistic theologians. Dr Goold seems to think of no one's conscience but his own; and even as regards it, his concern seems to be to accommodate the truth to it, rather than to have it enlightened by the truth. *Such and such a change would meet his conscience.* This is very good, but the question is, can truth be brought down to that level, and still remain truth?

It must be obvious to every intelligent reader of the section, that there are some of the opinions and practices spoken of, which can only be effectually dealt with by the power of the civil magistrate, as the parties maintaining them are not likely to be amenable to Church censure; and there are others which fall to be dealt with specially by the Church. And further, that it is only as any or all of the offences fall under the jurisdiction of Church or State jointly or separately that they can be taken cognisance of by both or either. What may be a proper object of Church censure may not be a proper object of civil pains, and *vice versa*, or it may be a proper object for both. "To render an action," says Dr M'Crie, "the proper object of magistratical punishment, it is not enough that it be contrary to the law of God, whether natural or revealed; it must in some way or another *strike against the public*

*good of society.*" It is not with *sinful* actions as such, but as *criminal*, that the magistrate takes to do with them. On the other hand, it is not with actions as violations of the law of the land, but as *scandalous*, that the Church takes to do with them. According, therefore, as an action is a *scandal* or a *crime*, or both, so does it fall under the special cognisance of Church or State, or both.

This doctrine is expressed in the "Act and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church," p. 160, in the following language:—"All who vent or maintain tenets or opinions contrary to the established principles of Christianity, whether in the matter of doctrine, divine worship, or practice of life, . . . upon proper conviction, ought to be proceeded against by inflicting ecclesiastical censures, or *civil pains*, in a way agreeable to the divine determination in the Word concerning such offences." So far as we are aware, this is still the received doctrine and testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; and how that should be a persecuting doctrine in the Confession of Faith, which is perfectly consistent with the rights of conscience in the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, it is for Dr Goold and not for us to show. We receive this testimony as an additional one in favour of the doctrine of the Confession that the magistrate has a compulsive power about matters of religion,

which may and ought to be put forth in vindicating the just order of society, and restraining the abuse of liberty of conscience. In other words, the Establishment principle, *as such*, does not violate the rights of conscience, or lead to persecution, since there are various actions of men about religion which ought to be restrained and punished by the power of the civil magistrate. "There is a wide and essential distinction," says Dr M'Crie, "between *the exercise of a compulsive power about religion* and *compulsion in religion*. Yet there are *masters in Israel* who can magisterially decide this controversy without having learned its *first principles*, or attending to the most necessary distinctions on the subject!"\*

Let us listen to the grand outrage which, according to the authors of this manifesto, is committed on the rights of conscience by the State Church system. It is the old cry, "Legalised robbery!" "Theft for religious purposes!" It compels "a citizen to part with his money, time, or labour, for *alleged* sacred purposes." It would appear to be doubtful whether the purposes are sacred! They do not say anything about men being compelled to be religious by Act of Parliament. We presume, therefore, that our modern Voluntaries have given this up as indefensible nonsense, and it is not our purpose to deal with the *ravings* of the past.

\* "Statement," &c., p. 150.

The gravamen of the charge against the State Church system is still as formerly—it violates the *conscience* through the *pocket*. This, of course, is a charge of spoliation and robbery! The State Church system sanctions and requires oppression and robbery for burnt-offering! There never was any ground for this charge as regards the Established Church of Scotland (and therefore it does not *necessarily* attach to the system), for, instead of being supported at the expense of the nation, the nation has enriched itself at her expense. Had she got her own, things would have been very different this day. And certainly it is a little too much to attempt to support a charge of persecution against a system, when the only *shadow of a shade* of ground there ever was on which to rest it vanished with the abolition of the Annuity-tax. Since *then* at least the religious impost has been so mixed up with civil charges as to become disguised, though, as the manifesto would say, “ill disguised compulsion and circuitous theft for religious purposes.” And we can only now, at all events, account for the complaint against the State Church system, as wounding the *consciences* of Dissenters through their *pockets*, on the understanding that they have pocketed *their conscience* by meekly submitting to the “circuitous theft for religious purposes.” This might suffice as a reply to this groundless

allegation. And as they bring forward no other in support of the charge against the system as violating the rights of conscience, it must fall to the ground.

But we shall, in a sentence, indicate how entirely fallacious and destructive of society this style of so-called argument is. We quite agree with the authors of the manifesto that "there is no difference between compelling a man to part with his money and compelling him to part with his time and labour for . . . sacred purposes." And, therefore, out of their own mouths they are condemned. For the magistrate either has or he has not the right, as the minister of "the Lord of the Sabbath," consulting for the good of the people, to make laws for preventing the profanation, and promoting the observance and sanctification of the Sabbath. *If he has not*, then the words in the famous "Articles of Agreement" between the United Presbyterian and Free Churches—in which it is said, the magistrate, "in his administration, is to respect its (the Sabbath's) sacred character," and to "legislate in the matter of its outward observance"—are, in so far as the former are concerned, a mere juggle and wicked deception, which remind one of the important omission which Satan made when he quoted Scripture, and professed to stand by it. *If he has*, then, the authors

of the manifesto being witnesses, the magistrate has an equal right to compel a man to part with his money and labour as with a seventh part of his time for religious purposes. There is no possibility of evading this conclusion by the discreditable device of attempting to separate between the secular and religious ends of the Sabbath. This has been unanswerably disposed of by Dr Brown in his work on Establishments. The Sabbath is a part of the moral law ; and if the magistrate is not entitled to enforce the outward observance of the moral law, he has as good as no moral duty to discharge ; and if he has, then, as we have seen, he has the right to enforce things which must more or less affect the consciences of his subject, and, in this matter of the Sabbath affect them in the way of compelling men to part with their time, which is the same as their money. Is this no violation of the rights of conscience, according to the authors of the manifesto ?

The fact is, as has been said, that “ the Sabbath cannot be consistently pleaded for as contributing to promote the secular interests of society, except on the principle that the *observance of religious ordinances* does so.” And hence, in admitting that the magistrate may lawfully enforce the Sabbath law for the *secular good* of society, it is admitted that a divine institution, which is specially designed for *the*

*religious and spiritual good* of men, may, nevertheless, be lawfully enforced by the civil magistrate, *because of its important influence* on the outward good of society, even though it does involve the surrender of time and money on the part of the subject. And in conceding this, there is no denying the right and duty of the magistrate to give of the national resources, which are just the money and labour of the people, for promoting the cause of religion, this being the most effectual means of promoting the *public good* of society. As Dr M'Crie says, "By taking religion under the protection of law, giving public and decided countenance to its institutions, and by a National Establishment, which provides for the religious instruction of her subjects, magistrates employ means the best adapted for promoting and reforming national evils, and which conduce to lessen the necessity for the execution of penal and sanguinary laws."\* Dr C. J. Brown says—

"The endowment of the Church, instead of being prejudicial to the State, is so necessary to its welfare that the State is bound to endow her *for the sake of its own interests*.

. . . So far are States from being bound to give themselves no concern about the religion of their people, they are on the contrary bound, as they would avoid the commission of *national suicide*, to use every means within their reach for *promoting* that religion, which is virtue's only solid basis.

. . . I cannot help adding that if, as we formerly saw,

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\* "Statement," &c., p. 117.

the State would commit a violation of duty in not endowing the Church, for the sake of the Church herself, . . . that violation of duty must rise to *an absolute contempt of the Church and of her God*, since we have seen that, instead of being prejudicial to the interests of the State, the endowment is a matter of positive duty with a view to these very interests.”\*

Again—“The subject of the magistrate’s obligation to endow the Church with a view to the temporal good of his people affords an illustration, which I cannot help noticing, of the impossibility of *separating* the Church from the State, *without setting their respective claims in hostility to each other*.”† No one will deny the truth and justice of the position laid down in these extracts as to the importance of religion to the nation. No one *but Voluntaries* will deny the justice of the general conclusion; and in their denying it, they isolate themselves, not only from the Presbyterian Churches in the country, but from all reasonable men. However, therefore, the power of the State may be imprudently exerted in behalf of the truth, or flagrantly abused in countenancing and supporting error, there is nothing in the Establishment principle or the State Church system of itself involving persecution, or any violation of the rights of conscience.

\* “Lectures on Church Establishments,” Lect. iv., pp. 12, 13, 17. Edinburgh, 1835.

† “Church Establishments Defended,” p. 62.”

## VI.

### SCRIPTURE RULES AND EXAMPLES.

*Secondly*, The State Church system *is opposed to the special rules and examples of Scripture*. This is the second method by which it is attempted to prove that the system is unscriptural. It was attempted by applying to it the test of the general principles of Scripture—first, it *invades the divine prerogative*; and secondly, it *violates the rights of conscience*. In disposing of these we have shown that it is not the Establishment principle, but the Christian Voluntarism of the authors of the manifesto that is proved to be unscriptural when brought to these tests. And after what we have done in the way of demonstrating that the advancement of religion in a country does fall within the proper sphere of the magistrate, as an acknowledgment of the divine prerogative, and as the most effectual means of promoting the public good of society, and that the system which denies this saps the foundations of all national and family religion, and of all public religious worship, we feel as if to proceed with the Scripture argument were almost a virtual acknowledgment that we had failed in doing this.

The very idea of such a system—a system which Dr Robert Buchanan, of Glasgow, declares to be a *device of the great enemy*—being sanctioned by the Word of God is repugnant to the mind. But it may be said, on the other hand, that the testimony of Scripture is so clearly against the State Church system and in favour of Christian Voluntaryism, that the representations of Dr Buchanan cannot possibly be true. Let us then consider their Scripture proof. They begin with the Old Testament, which is a portion of the Word in which Voluntaryism has always found difficulty in breathing. The whole atmosphere of the Old Testament, so to speak, is so impregnated with the element of national responsibility or national obligation to serve God and advance His Kingdom, that we should not have been at all surprised, had the authors of the manifesto allowed the old attempts, to evade the force of the argument drawn from it in favour of the Establishment principle, to stand for what they were worth, and passed on at once to the New Testament. However, they have judged otherwise, and we shall see how far they have profited by the light which was shed upon the subject more than thirty years ago.

The State Church system *is contrary to Old Testament institutions*. This is the thing which the authors of the manifesto profess to prove. And in

order, we presume, to prepare men the better to see and comprehend their remarkable reasoning, they begin by throwing dust in their eyes, and insulting their understandings, by asserting—"In Old Testament institutions we look in vain for the features of civil enactment, support, or control of religion," of course, as contended for by the advocates of the Establishment principle. The power of assertion here is so great that we acknowledge being fairly staggered by it. There is nothing like putting on a bold front when about to meet a formidable difficulty; and certainly this bold assertion almost disarms opposition. Do the men who hazard it really believe it? Not a trace of the Establishment principle in Old Testament institutions! The assertion is simply and *supremely* ridiculous, or, we should rather say, absolutely and notoriously without foundation.

As an offset to this extraordinary assertion, we give the following quotation from a writer before whose trenchant arguments and scorching replies the Voluntaries of former days quailed. We refer to the late Dr Andrew Thomson.

"The Government," he says, "of the nation of Israel, the only nation for which Jehovah condescends immediately to legislate, recognised and established that particular form of supernatural religion which, at that time, God was pleased to reveal. When God at first set up His ordinances among Israel as a nation, He not only employed Aaron the priest, but Moses the king of Jeshurun; and during the subsequent

history of that people, we find the civil and ecclesiastical authorities co-operating in the maintenance and reformation of religion. David and Abiathar—Solomon and Zadok—Hezekiah and Azariah—Zerubbabel and Joshua—king and priest go hand in hand. And when they were come under the dominion of a foreign power, the Lord stirred up the Persian monarchs to favour the cause of His people, and not merely to allow them a negative toleration, but to give them legal countenance by public edicts, and also to grant them pecuniary assistance for the erection of the house of God, and for the maintenance of His worship" (*Christian Instructor*, 1830, p. 595).

"*Primitive and patriarchal times yield no trace of it.*" Whether the fact of Abraham presenting tithes to Melchisedec, to which allusion is made, affords a solid and conclusive argument in favour of Establishments or not, we are not careful to answer. It certainly points in that direction, and it gives no countenance whatever to the principle which declares it to be a sin for the nation to give of its resources for the kingdom of Christ. The argument from patriarchal times, which would have had relevancy in this case, could it have been furnished, would have been one drawn from the conduct of Abraham towards those under him. But this the authors of the manifesto knew to be wholly against them, and therefore they conveniently omit all allusion to it. For, if there is one thing more clearly revealed than another, it is that Abraham, as king and head of his household, felt and acknowledged the obligation lying upon him

authoritatively to aim at the promotion of the good both temporal and spiritual of those under his government and control. So that patriarchal times are in favour of the State Church system and against Voluntaryism.

“Heathen monarchs proclaiming fasts, and decreeing religion under penalties [as the manifesto terms it], are not approved . . . as models of zeal with knowledge.” There is just as good ground for making such an assertion as there is for maintaining that no such things ever took place. Was the preservation of Nineveh not an indication of the divine approval of the conduct of the King in proclaiming a fast? To speak of the mercy of God having been extended to the king and his people “*on their personal repentance*,” as is done in the manifesto, would, in the lips of any other than a Voluntary, have been nothing short of scoffing at the truth. Was the conduct of Artaxerxes not approved of God, when he gave commandment about building the house of the Lord, or in the choice language of the manifesto, “decreed religion under penalties,” saying, “Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? . . . And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the

law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment?" Was this conduct not approved? Let the words of Ezra decide, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, *which hath put* such a thing as this *in the king's heart*, to beautify the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem" (Ezra vii. 23, 26, 27)

In preaching before the House of Commons from Ezra vii. 23, in Dec. 1643, Alex. Henderson says, "This King commandeth not that his will be done, but what *God hath commanded*. Neither King nor Parliament can command otherwise. Civil powers have *great authority*, not only in things civil, but in *matters of religion*, and they sin against God if they use not the authority which God has put into their hands for the good of religion. . . . Religion expecteth from them the civil sanction that the worship of God, and the wholesome constitutions of the Church, about religion, be confirmed and settled by their laws" (pp. 20, 21).

We can confidently appeal to every candid reader whether these instances of the conduct of heathen monarchs about religion and the Church *were not approved* of God, and whether they do not afford divine warrant and sanction for the Establishment principle—viz., that magistrates ought, for the honour of God, and the good of their realm, to

care about the moral and religious interests of their people, by legislating on their behalf. No wonder, then, the authors of the manifesto so summarily pass them over. But it says little for Christian Voluntaryism that a company of Christian ministers should feel themselves required, in its support, to speak so contemptuously of these rulers, "as not approved for their threats and their injunctions as models of zeal with knowledge."

The next example mentioned is *the Jewish Church*. The Church under the Jewish dispensation was, by divine direction, rendered a chief object of the magistrate's care. It was as truly a Church of Christ as the Church under the gospel—as truly an independent spiritual kingdom, distinct from, though in the most friendly alliance with, the State. Then, as now, Church and State had each its distinct rulers, courts, laws, subjects, and penalties. There was then, as matter of fact which no one can deny, a relation subsisting between the Jewish Church and State, involving co-ordinate jurisdiction and mutual obligations, and this was constituted by God. And this fact, that an Establishment of the true religion had, once, for fifteen hundred years, the sanction of divine approbation, proves, if it proves anything, that, *in its own nature*, such an Establishment is neither sinful nor unjust.

"In it," the Israelitish commonwealth (says Dr M'Crie), "we have the example of a system of legislation adapted to the state of a people who were favoured with the true religion. Everything in it was subordinated to this important concern. The laws expressly recognised religion, provided for the maintenance of its ordinances, and the rulers were taken solemnly bound to support them in their station. Thus, those principles which are founded in the light of nature, and by which all nations are obligated to regulate themselves in framing their constitution and conducting their administrations so as to promote the honour of God, and to accord with, secure, and advance religion, the highest of all their interests, were recognised and sanctioned by Jehovah himself, and applied to the true religion revealed from heaven. In this respect the Jewish constitution is exemplary to Christian nations."\*

Jewish rulers were expressly commanded by the Lord to afford countenance and support to His Church and cause. It is required of Voluntaries, if they would free themselves from the charge of resisting the will of God, to *demonstrate what there was, if anything, about the Jewish constitution to prevent its being an example to Christian nations; or when and where and how rulers under the gospel dispensation have been relieved from all obligation to promote the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ?* We shall hear what the authors of this manifesto have to say in answer to these questions.

They begin by saying, "The Jewish Church was . . . a pure theocracy or Church State, in which God was all." Well, it may be so called; and we take for granted that they will agree with

\* "Statement," &c., p. 128.

us in maintaining that the *gospel Church* may no less truly be characterised as a theocracy, in the sense of having a Divine King and Head, who has given her a constitution, laws, government, and discipline, over which He exercises a peculiar providence. Christ says, "My kingdom is not of this world." "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Anything beyond these, which pertained to the Jewish Church—as, for example, the minute and specific manner in which its whole constitution, laws, and ordinances were prescribed by God—will not warrant us to designate it a theocracy in contradistinction from the Church under the New Testament dispensation. Of course, the substantial identity between the Jewish and the Christian Church is not the question in dispute, though it is the one really raised in the sentence quoted. It is possible that the authors of the manifesto meant to say, that *the Jews lived under a theocracy*, as it seems to be their design to prove that the peculiarity of the constitution under which the Jews lived renders it impossible for us to found upon it an argument in favour of Establishments. We shall refer to this immediately. Meanwhile, this is not what they do state in the opening clause; and all they can expect reasonable men, when dealing with the question of Church and State connection, to deduce from their opening state-

ment, is, that if there was nothing in the fact of its being a theocracy to prevent the Jewish Church from being allied with the State, there can be nothing in the character of the New Testament Church, in itself considered, to prevent its forming a similar alliance. The analogy is all against Voluntaryism, and in favour of the Establishment principle.

We have, however, more to say upon this first clause, especially when taken in connection with that which immediately follows, which is to the following effect—"So far from being a civil Establishment of religion, it (the Jewish Church) was wholly a divine establishment of *religion* and *civil life*, set up by infallible Deity, who guided its administration," &c. This is just that blending of the civil and sacred in the Jewish Church and commonwealth for which Erastians pleaded. Coleman, their great champion, says—"I am sure the best reformed Church that ever was—I mean the Church of Israel—went this way, which had no distinction of Church government and civil government." Thus do Voluntaries—modern, Christian Voluntaries—find it necessary to entrench themselves in the stronghold of Erastianism, in order to destroy the argument for Establishments of religion, which is founded on the Old Testament Scriptures. And yet these men, who thus blend the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions among the

Jews, and so lay a foundation for an Erastian claim, are the very men who talk about the independence of the New Testament Church, and the great sin involved in State-Churchism, because of its blending the civil with the sacred. *They* would so blend the jurisdictions of Church and State under the Jewish economy as to *destroy utterly* the distinguishing characteristics of each, in order that they may shut us out from a powerful and unanswerable argument in favour of what *they term* the sinful blending of the civil and sacred, which is involved in that independent union between Church and State, in which their distinctive jurisdictions are preserved, for which we contend. This famous Erastian dictum of the United Presbyterian Church, that "*the Jewish Church* was wholly a divine establishment of religion and *civil life*," does not affect our argument in behalf of Establishments, in so far as it rests on the state of things among the Jews, as it can easily be demonstrated to be utterly baseless and grossly unscriptural; but it is well for them to know that, in adopting this dictum, *they at least* cannot appeal to the Jewish Church in support of their position against Establishments, as blending the civil and the sacred.

Having exposed and disarmed the authors of the manifesto, and turned their famous weapon

against themselves, it remains for us to show how far the argument in favour of Establishments of religion, based on the state of things among the Jews, is affected by the fact that they lived under a theocracy. A theocracy implies two things—a system of laws immediately given to a people from heaven, and the exercise of a peculiar providence in supporting and sanctioning that system by conferring national mercies, and inflicting national judgments, often in an immediate and extraordinary way. The Jews lived under such a system, and this must, of course, be taken into account when referring to them as examples for our imitation, but it by no means prevents us from appealing to them as such.

"Although," says Dr Owen, "the institutions and examples of the Old Testament of the duty of the magistrate in the things and about the worship of God, are not in their whole latitude and extent to be drawn into rules that should be obligatory on all magistrates now, under the dispensation of the gospel, yet, *doubtless there is something in those institutions which, being unclothed of their judicial form, is still binding, to all in the like kind, as to some analogy and proportion. Subtract from these administrations what was proper to, and lies upon the account of the nation and Church of the Jews, and what remains upon the general notion of a church and nation must be everlastingly binding.* And this amounts thus far at least, that judges, magistrates, and rulers . . . are to take care that the *gospel Church* may, in all its concerns as such, be *supported and promoted, and the truth propagated wherewith they are entrusted.*" \*

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\* "Sermon on Dan. vii. 15, 16," pp. 52, 53.

If we are to regard the Jewish Church and nation as exemplary to us at all, their example manifestly goes thus far, that it is the duty of civil rulers, into whose dominions the true religion has been introduced, legally to recognise and further the Church. Being shrewd enough to perceive this, the authors of the manifesto take up the old ground, that being a theocracy, they cannot *in any respect* be exemplary to rulers under the Christian dispensation. They, of course, design to limit their remark to the relation which the rulers of the Jews sustained towards religion and the Church. But if their principle of interpretation is worth anything, they must go through with it. They must fairly face the consequences of this theory of theirs. The Jewish *rulers* lived under a theocracy, and therefore they cannot be held up as examples to rulers in Christian nations. Such is their position! But the Jewish *people* lived under the same theocracy, and therefore they cannot be examples to us as individuals, or in any relationship in life. Such is the consequence of that position. We are thus precluded from referring to the penitence of David, as an example for us individually, as much as to his acts for the advancement of the kingdom of God, as an example for Christian princes.

If the fact that God spake to David, so that he could preface all his royal mandates with, "Thus

saith the Lord," takes them out of the category of examples for Christian princes, then the fact that, when he became truly penitent, he had a prophet at his ear (which was the distinguishing features of the reigns of Hezekiah, Josiah, and other kings, according to the manifesto), saying, "Thou art the man," equally takes his penitence out of the category of examples for us. In short, if this principle is admitted, it virtually sets aside the whole Old Testament, and a great part of the New, as a rule of faith and practice for man. How, for instance, on such a principle as this, can Christ the God-man be set forth as an example for His people? or how can the apostles, who were immediately taught by Him and inspired, be ensamples to Christian ministers? or how can any of those who were instructed, either by Christ himself, or His inspired messengers, be examples for us? But whatever may be the opinion of Christian Voluntaries, the fact that God legislated for the Jewish nation by His own mouth, and carried His laws into execution in the way both of rewarding and punishing with His own hand, did not prevent the apostle improving the dealings of God toward Israel for the encouragement and warning of Christians, saying, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples," &c. (1 Cor. x. 6-11).

Let us, however, suppose a Christian minister,

after the example of Paul, in warning this nation of her sin and danger, and calling her to repentance, were to enforce his exhortations by referring to the providence of God in bestowing national prosperity on Israel when they observed His judgments and walked in His ways, and in visiting them with national calamities when they turned aside from Him and followed their own sinful devices—the authors of this manifesto, or some minister of the United Presbyterian Church, would in such a case withstand him to the face, and remind him that the providential dealings of God toward Israel belonged to the theocracy, and therefore ought not to be referred to as encouragements to righteousness or dissuasives from sin, when we are dealing with another nation about such things.

## VII.

### “ OLD TESTAMENT INSTITUTIONS.”

WE have further to remark on this subject, that, as presented in the manifesto, it necessarily involves the setting aside of the Old Testament as a rule of faith and practice for us. This, indeed, is the very position taken up by Mr Lawson, when, in inaugurating Voluntaryism in the end of last century, he says, “No terms of communion in the Christian Church ought to depend on any other authority but that of the New Testament.”\* The principle now advocated by Christian Voluntaries goes even further, for it virtually involves the rejection of all written revelation, on the ground that no one can certainly expound or declare its principles and precepts, so that they shall be authoritatively binding on the conscience as the Word of God. “God,” they say, “spake by Moses and David and others, but we look in vain for proof that He spake by Constantine,” &c. It will surely be allowed by the authors of the manifesto that if

\* “Considerations on the Overture, &c.,” by Rev. George Lawson, Selkirk, 1797, p. 69.

God was to make use of human agency in revealing His will to men, He must have communicated it, in the first instance, in a supernatural way, to those whom He was to employ for that purpose. Unless therefore it is maintained that what God spake by Moses and David was designed exclusively for themselves and those immediately addressed by them, the whole argument is impertinent and beside the question. If the utterances of Moses and David were only for themselves and their people, then they cannot be authoritatively binding upon us. And in that case the law of the ten commandments and the greater portion of the book of Psalms cease to be of divine revelation to us. But if they were designed for others than themselves and their people, they must manifestly be intended for all who may be similarly circumstanced. So that, should Constantine or any other ruler, having heard the word of the Lord by Moses and David, take steps to have it made known among his people, as he would be bound to do, this certainly would not make it lose any of its divine and binding authority. It did not require that the Lord should actually speak anew by Constantine to render the words which He spoke by Moses and David binding upon the conscience. It was not the mere circumstance of their having been spoken by Moses and David that gave their

words authoritative power over the conscience, and neither could the circumstances of these same words being spoken by Constantine or any other, of itself, weaken that authority and power. If God has so spoken by Moses and David and others that we in the use of ordinary means may, through His blessing, attain to a knowledge of His will through their writings, then it will not do to draw the distinction between what God actually spoke by His servants, and what He has recorded through their instrumentality for our instruction in the written word, as though the one had a binding authority entirely different from the other. This is what the authors of the manifesto do, and do in such a way as virtually to set aside the Scriptures as an infallible rule of faith and practice.

They say—"Hezekiah, Josiah, and other kings *had prophets at their ears*; but this will not be alleged of the Jameses, . . . or of the Parliaments, . . . that ratified the Confession and Catechisms. Men, in whatever station, are now referred for rules and principles to a completed Scripture, without power to enforce on others the interpretations they adopt." This is quite the United Presbyterian free-and-easy creed, which leaves every man at perfect liberty to adopt whatever principles, and follow whatever rules and practices he may judge accordant with Scripture,

without control or restraint, as no man, according to them, "in whatever station," has any power to enforce his interpretation of Scripture as of divine and binding authority. Every man's principles and rules of action, according to this doctrine, are as good as those of his neighbours, and have as good a claim to be regarded as scriptural. No man has any right now, according to this Voluntary doctrine, to insist upon any principle or rule of action as of divine authority, seeing he has not *a living prophet at his ear*.

We are referred, they tell us, "to a completed Scripture"—in other words, we have all the prophets and apostles speaking in our ears; but somehow or other they have expressed themselves, in the opinion of Voluntaries, very unintelligibly in writing, or there must be some extraordinary defect about us, seeing that one prophet, speaking in the ear of Hezekiah, made him quite certain as to what was the mind of God, so that he could enforce it as of divine authority; whereas, with the writings of all the prophets in our hands, we, according to the Christian Voluntaries, are not able to pronounce decisively regarding any principle or rule of action that it is part of the revealed will of God, which we would be entitled and called upon to enforce, as such, in a suitable way upon our fellowmen. Hezekiah, in consulting for the

glory of God and the good of his people, according to the doctrine of the manifesto, had power to enforce the law of the Sabbath, for example, *because* he had the prophet Isaiah sounding in his ears these words, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, . . . I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father." But no modern sovereign who may read these words in the book of the prophet would, according to the new doctrine, be warranted in enforcing this law, because it would only at the best be a human interpretation of it, and he could not be certain that it was the very mind of God. For any man now, with nothing but the written word, or "a completed Scripture," in his hands, to say regarding any doctrine or rule of action, "Thus saith the Lord," were an act of daring presumption and impiety, as it were to give forth his own interpretation as the word of God! So say Christian Voluntaries.

If, then, "there is nothing more truly impious" than for rulers now, who have no prophet at their ear (*i.e.*, no infallible interpreter or interpretation of the Scriptures), to give the civil sanction to any creed, as in accordance with the revealed will of God, or to enforce any commandment as of divine autho-

riety, it must be equally impious for the Church or for parents to do this, who have no other available means for discovering what is the very truth of God than those which are within the reach of the magistrate. For the Church that holds the doctrine contained in this manifesto to think to exercise discipline upon a man who denies the divinity of Jesus Christ or the personality of the Holy Ghost, were to be guilty of the impiety, according to it, of attempting to enforce her interpretation of the Scriptures as the truth of God, when she lays claim to no right of infallible interpretation. It must be equally impious for parents to press upon the consciences and hearts of their children, as the truth of God, the interpretation of Scripture which they have adopted. This most mischievous doctrine overthrows the very foundation on which Protestantism rests—the Scripture as the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice; while it shuts up to the Popish doctrine,—the necessity for an infallible interpreter. Voluntaryism is thus more cruel than Popery; for when the latter denies the right of private interpretation, it professes to provide its votaries with an infallible interpreter; whereas Voluntaryism leaves its followers to wander in a record which is, according to them, of doubtful and uncertain

interpretation, and declares itself unable to help them.

The following passage, from the sermon of Dr M'Farlane at the opening of the Assembly in 1835, is deserving of serious consideration :—

“Many in the present day ask, with strong semblance of liberality, Who dare affirm that he has certainly discovered the truth in things spiritual, and that his fellow-men, who entertain different and opposite opinions from him, are certainly in error? The religious opinions of men professing to believe in Christianity are innumerable : and how can any man venture to affirm, amidst this infinite variety of human opinion, that he has undoubtedly discovered the true wisdom? Every sect professes to appeal to the Scriptures as its authority, but each one has its own interpretation; who shall decide which is false and which is true? To decide on such a subject, and in such circumstances, is presumption—to act upon that decision is bigotry.

“Call this by what name you please—it is infidelity : it amounts to this, that we have no revelation of the will of God—no sure word of prophecy—no light shining in a dark place—no divine teacher—no unerring instructor to guide our feet into the paths of peace. It is virtually to declare that since inspiration ceased, in other words, since the days of Christ and His apostles, the use and end of inspiration has ceased also, and that no man can know with any degree of assurance the character of the God whom it is his duty to worship, or the foundations of his hope, or even the precepts and principles of pure morality. The sentiments which I have described have the garb of liberality; but they are nothing else than scepticism. If followed to their legitimate consequences, they must issue, not in infidelity merely, but in atheism.”—Pp. 14, 15.

The allusion to the part which the Jameses and Charleses, who had no "prophets at their ears," took in forwarding the work of Reformation is considered by the authors of the manifesto as peculiarly happy and telling. It is singularly telling, but unhappily it tells against the intellects of the men who introduce it. It certainly says little for the reasoning power of the members of the Committee which issued this document, that they should attempt to found anything upon such an allusion, as though it were not palpable to the intellect of every man who is entitled to enjoy freedom from restraint, that in so far as these men did what was in itself for the advancement of religion, whatever might be their personal character or aims, it cannot be condemned as not approved of God, because they had not prophets at their ears, any more than the conduct of Ahab and other kings of Israel must be approved, because they had prophets at their ears. "It is ridiculous," says Dr C. J. Brown, "to allege that the mere fact of God's enjoining an action upon a ruler of Israel destroys its obligation as an example. On the contrary, the command rather affords a presumption in favour of the obligation, although in each case *the nature of the action* must be considered in order to determine the matter with accuracy." \*

- Strong and startling as were the statements made by Voluntaries during the heat of the controversy, we question if anything ever fell from their lips which looks liker profanity and scornful contempt for the whole work of national reformation in this country than the following :—" It was certainly not enjoined by God," say the authors of the manifesto, " that the Confession of Faith or the Thirty-nine Articles should be made the law of the land, or that Henry VIII. should constitute himself head of the Church of England in room of the Pope; or that James should establish Presbytery; or [mark it] Charles II. swear the Solemn League and Covenant." These statements are not deserving of a serious reply; they bear their own refutation in their face, while the spirit in which they are conceived will draw upon their authors the merited rebuke of every true Christian in the kingdom. The penning of such sentences is, in our judgment, discreditable alike to the head and heart of their authors, and there can be no reasonable doubt who enjoined them to put them on record.

It is, then, in the fact that the care of the true religion was devolved by God upon the rulers of the Jews, that we find the example which all rulers favoured with divine revelation are required to

\* " Church Establishments Defended," p. 102.

follow. Nor is the force and obligation of this example set aside or destroyed by the circumstance that Jewish rulers were instructed directly by inspired prophets, any more than the words of these same prophets, in revealing God's mind and will to the people, have ceased to have a binding obligation upon us. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime," says the apostle, "were written for our learning;" and again, "They are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The revelation which we now have in our hands in the Holy Scriptures was no less directly and immediately given by God to the Jews as a people, than were the injunctions to their rulers to care for and further the interests of that religion thus miraculously revealed. And if the revelation which we now have in the Holy Scriptures is to be regarded as no less truly the voice of God to us, and therefore binding upon our consciences, than it was to those to whom it was immediately made known; then surely the injunctions which God immediately laid upon Jewish rulers, to care for and promote that truth which He was at the very time, *directly by His prophets*, unfolding to the people, cannot be regarded as less truly the voice of God to all rulers who have the written Word in their hands. Well may we ask, with Dr C. J. Brown, "With what show of

reason can it be maintained that the care in general exercised by the rulers of Israel about religion *belonged to the peculiarities of the theocracy?* ” \*

But while we have thus exposed this theory of the authors of the manifesto regarding a theocracy, and shown its real nature and bearings, we must not be understood as conceding to them that there is any foundation for their argument, such as it is. The theocracy, strictly speaking, came to an end in the time of Samuel, when the people would have a king like other nations. Then they rejected God as their king ; and though He continued to deal with them as His chosen people, the seed of Abraham His friend, so that many things still remained in their government which were peculiar to them as such, and cannot therefore be considered as precedents for other nations ; yet God administered His government towards them after that, and on to the end of the dispensation, much in the same manner as He still does towards nations favoured with the light of divine revelation. In his commentary on 1 Sam. viii., where this event is referred to, Matthew Henry says—“ The government of Israel *had hitherto been* in a more peculiar manner than ever any government was a theocracy, a divine government ; their judges had their call

\* “ Church Establishments Defended,” p. 100.

and commission immediately from God; the affairs of their nation were under His peculiar conduct. As the constitution, so the administration of the government was by, *Thus saith the Lord. This method they were weary of*, though it was their honour and safety, above anything, so long as they kept in with God." After the time of Samuel, this special theocratic character of the Jewish Government came to an end. And the authors of the manifesto ought to have known this, if they did not, before issuing their famous document with its allusions to the Jewish theocracy, as though it continued to exist in the time of David, and the other kings and rulers after him, who were so eminently serviceable in promoting the cause of truth, *just as it did* in the time of Moses and the Judges. Their ignorance, if not wilful, is amazing. If they wish to found an argument against Establishments upon the history of the kingly government of Israel, we would suggest, whether—as "God gave them a king in His anger"—they might not find it more to their purpose, as it would assuredly better define and illustrate the real tendency of their opinions, were they to adopt the Anabaptist notion, that all civil government is sinful, than continue to argue thus about a defunct theocracy.

*"Appointment of its ministers."* The attempt

under this heading to set aside the scriptural argument for Establishment, derived from the Old Testament, is truly ridiculous, and is, to use the language of the old Dissenters, better answered by "a smile, than an argument." The following is their statement:—"In contrast with the system of appointment in State Churches, it is undoubted that the appointment of the ministers of religion lay exclusively with God." Granting, "that the appointment of the ministers of religion" in the Jewish Church "lay exclusively with God," this would only prove that neither the Establishment, nor any Church on earth now, can appeal to the Jewish Church as an example, *in that particular*. But as regards the appointment of ministers in an Established Church, it *may be* as truly popular as in any dissenting body. Patronage was not always the law of the land (any more than Church managers have ever been recognised in Scripture), and we trust the day is not far distant when this law, of which Voluntaries have made such a handle, and which has been fraught with so much injury to the Church, shall be abolished.

"*Support of religion*" is their next heading. This is a favourite topic with Voluntaries. The idea of State-money going for the instruction of the people, old or young, in the truths of God's holy Word, is what Voluntaries cannot tolerate; though

they do not object to it going for instructing them in any other subject, not excepting the heathen mythology of Greece and Rome. And in setting themselves to dispose of the argument in favour of the national support of religion derived from the state of things which prevailed among the Jews, they begin as usual with the bold assertion, "In regard to the support of religion, the contrast was no less striking." We have always been inclined to think (in our ignorance, no doubt) that, instead of a contrast, there was a very strong and *marked resemblance* between the national provision for the support of religion among the Jews, and that which we advocate when contending for a National Establishment of religion. But we shall hear what Christian Voluntaries have to say. Of course their theory about the theocracy should cover this question of the national support, as well as that of the national recognition of the Church. According to this theory, the Jewish system of support of religion can no more be exemplary to us than the Jewish system of State sanction. But, like all theories adopted to serve a purpose, it becomes conveniently pliable in the hands of the theorists. *Because it was a theocracy*, the advocates of Establishments, according to the authors of the manifesto, can find no argument in favour of the scriptural warrant for a connection between Church and State from the

example of the Jews; but *though it is a theocracy*, this does not prevent Voluntaries from founding, or attempting to found, an argument in favour of the Voluntary support of religion upon it. This theory of United Presbyterians is a very serviceable one, as it only operates in one direction. In other words, it is a purely Christian Voluntary theory. When it is found impossible to deny that the Establishment principle was sanctioned under the Jewish dispensation, in comes the Voluntary theory of a theocracy, and sweeps away the whole as an example for Christian rulers, and indeed the whole Old Testament as a rule of faith for us. And having done this, to its own satisfaction, it strangely enough endeavours to lay hold of the institutions—whose theocratical character silenced them as witnesses for religious Establishments—as faithful witnesses for Voluntaryism.

Now, however Voluntaryism may have blinded the eyes, and strangely transformed the whole mental constitution of the authors of this manifesto, they should have remembered that they are living amongst reasonable men, who have not yet been brought under the fascinating power of their system. A little legerdemain is all very well, time and place convenient, but when dealing with a matter of Scripture evidence, to think to carry conviction by such strange freaks of fancy, is an

outrage upon the reason and conscience of those whom they address. For what is it the authors of the manifesto really do? They do not cast Establishments out of the Old Testament, that they may occupy the position themselves, but they cause the whole Jewish economy and its institutions to pass away, as an example for Christian nations, under the wand of the Voluntary theory of a theocracy; and ere we have got time to reflect on the extraordinary effect produced, anon, under the influence of the same magic power, this very same Jewish theocracy reappears as an example against State, and in favour of Voluntary support of religion. This power of conjuring seems peculiar to the Voluntary principle; and it certainly does require to be explained by what process it is brought about, that the Jewish rulers who, under the theocracy as represented in the manifesto, had power to enact and enforce laws in favour of religion, should, after having vanished as examples for Christian princes in this respect, *re-appear without power to enforce* the laws in favour of payment for religious purposes, so as to become examples of *purely Voluntary* rulers. This surely demands explanation. It was bad enough in days of old, when an individual professed to have the power of bewitching his neighbour; but for a whole Church, through its committee, actually to put forth this power over civil rulers, must raise

the question whether the old laws regarding such practices should not again be put in force. But, seriously, the authors of the manifesto must either *hold by* their theory of a theocracy, or *let it go*. It will not do to attempt both at the same time.

We might therefore meet what the authors of the manifesto say about the "support of religion," by an appeal to their own representation of the state of things among the Jews, as "wholly a divine Establishment of religion and civil life." Is it to be imagined that the power conferred upon such rulers about religion under such an Establishment, would not extend to its support? But, having disposed of the attempt to set aside the argument in favour of Establishments derived from the Old Testament constitution, we shall now deal with the attempt here made to enlist the mode of supporting religion among the Jews in favour of Voluntaryism.

The Church among the Jews was not only *established* but *endowed*; whatever, therefore, may be urged in defence of the proposal contained in the manifesto, its title,—"*Disestablishment and Disendowment*,"—is at least, *in itself*, very far from being scriptural. We have to say at the outset that the principle of an Establishment is, in itself, no more at variance with the free-will offerings of the people now, than the bountiful provision made

by law for the Levites, superseded them among the Jews. It is the duty of the State to make for the true Church of Christ that provision which its circumstances may require, and which those of the State may admit; as it is incumbent on nations as well as individuals to honour the Lord with their substance. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the State must make *complete* provision for the Church, so as to leave no place for the free-will offerings of the Lord's people; and as matter of fact, we know that, apart altogether from the condition of Jew and Gentile abroad, which opens up such a wide field for Christian liberality and enterprise, there has been, and will always be, abundant scope, in the increasing wants of the people at home, for the exercise of Christian liberality. And we question if, with all their talk about the tendency of State support to *repress*, and of Voluntaryism to foster and encourage, the free-will offerings of the people, the Establishment is not contributing more liberally towards the advancement of the kingdom of Christ than the United Presbyterian Church. It is, therefore, nothing to the purpose to allege that the tabernacle was erected by free-will offerings, and not by taxation; that is just what we would have expected in the circumstances. It is, moreover, substantially what is being done every day by the Established

Church, both at home and abroad; and it would not help the cause of Voluntaryism, or damage the argument for State support of religion, were they able to produce many more instances of a similar kind among the Jews. They would not affect, in the smallest degree, the fact that *national provision was made for the support of the ministers of religion* under the Jewish polity, to which we shall immediately refer; and, while this fact remains, all instances of free-will offerings, whether for erecting buildings, or ministerial support, only prove that the two modes do not conflict, but that they may be, and ought to be, called forth in every rightly constituted relation between Church and State. The harmonious working of these was expressly contemplated and provided for in the Jewish economy in the law of free-will offerings, and it was also strikingly illustrated in the building of the second temple.

The authors of the manifesto very coolly assert that "the first and second temple were built on the same principle" as the tabernacle—*i.e.*, by free-will offerings. It is easy to make the assertion, but it is far from being so easy to produce the proof. Where is the evidence that the hire which Solomon gave to the servants of Hiram was given out of his own pocket? Is it not expressly written that "King Solomon raised a levy out of

all Israel, and the levy was thirty thousand men ?” Was that a private or a national contribution towards the work of building the temple? The fact is, that there is no evidence that free-will offerings from the people were presented for the building of the first temple. We learn from 1 Chron. xxix. that David and the princes laid past a large amount of gold and silver to be devoted to the building of the temple. This was David’s *legacy* to the work of the Lord, as many of the churches and the greater proportion of the revenue of the Establishment were the legacy of generous friends of religion. What was required for the erection of the temple, over and above the princely legacy of David, appears to have been borne by the nation, so as to be a signal act of national homage to God, and His truth and kingdom. Strictly speaking, therefore, there were no free-will offerings, in the Voluntary sense, at the building of the first temple, as Voluntary principle, whatever may be said of its practice, is as much opposed to private *legacies* as to national gifts for religion.

As regards the second temple, there were free-will offerings by the people; but what was needed for the house of God, over and above these free-will offerings, was ordered to be given, freely indeed, but magisterially, out of the national treasury; “And *whatsoever more shall be needful* for the house of thy God,

which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure-house. I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you it be done speedily, unto an hundred talents of silver," &c. (Ezra vii. 20-23). We shall not be so bold as to hazard the assertion, that a bill on the subject was actually introduced into the Parliament of Persia, and passed through both houses of their Legislature, so as to meet the demands of modern British legislation, and be adapted to the progress of the age! But we have no doubt that if the United Presbyterian Church, or its Disestablishment Committee, would adjourn to the kingdom of Persia, and make a search, like Darius, "in the house of the rolls," they would find some record which would enable them to amend this part of their manifesto in the next edition, should it ever be permitted to see the light.

As to the synagogues being the fruit "of the cheerful liberality of men like the pious centurion," this is so supremely ridiculous, that we have difficulty in considering it as anything else than a joke. So very little is known about the synagogues, that we should like to know where they got their information. The liberality of the centurion, like that of men in our day, who at their own expense

erect places of worship, was highly commendable, but we are rather disposed to think, from the allusion to it, that such an instance of liberality, then as now, was the exception rather than the rule.

“*Tithes.*” On this we do not require to dwell. It is notorious, as Dr C. J. Brown expresses it, that, “in the only civil polity ever established immediately by God, the support of the ministers of religion was not left dependent on the good-will of the people, but was made the subject of express enactment, setting apart certain fixed revenues as their property. . . . Since the *grounds* on which the rule proceeded can be shown not to have been ceremonial, or in any way peculiarly Jewish, but to have been moral and universal—applicable alike to the ministers of religion in every age—the case must, on that account, be held as indicating *the divine will* respecting this matter, not indeed in its details, but in its great leading principles.” \* It is deserving of the careful attention of the authors of this manifesto, that the expense of maintaining the worship of God in the wilderness was defrayed by a regular *legal assessment* or poll-tax. Moses, as the ruler of Israel, was expressly enjoined by God on the mount to levy a tax of half a shekel for this purpose

\* “Lectures on Church Establishments,” Lect. iv., p. 17. Edinburgh, 1835.

(Exod. xxx. 11-16). "The original *building and furnishing* the sanctuary," says Bush, "was provided for by the voluntary contributions of the people; but the necessary charges for *sustaining* the worship now to be established were to be defrayed from other sources. . . . The Most High . . . now orders that an assessment or poll-tax of half a shekel each should be engrafted on this custom (of taking a census), and that this should be the ordinary revenue for the support of the ritual." To attempt to set all this aside, and to enlist the mode of ministerial support among the Jews into an argument in favour of the system countenanced by Voluntaryism, is only an instance of the length to which men will go when they begin by making unfounded assertions. There are no limits to the possible in such a case.

Instead of this Jewish system "bearing no resemblance to civil endowments," as the authors of the manifesto assert, we are not sure if it is possible to find any system of ministerial support to which it bears a more striking resemblance than that which prevails in the Established Church of Scotland. "The Levites," we are told, "being destined to special duties, obtained no share in the division of the land." Their support was "derived from the soil of the Great Proprietor," as "His wages to His servants, who were also the servants

of all, . . . paid by the human tenants." Is not this the very case of ministers of an Establishment? Are not they devoted to special duties which deprive them of the opportunity of earning a livelihood in the way that would otherwise be open to them in common with other citizens? Are they not the Lord's servants for the good of all? And is it not, therefore, most just that they should obtain needed support from the soil of the Great Proprietor, as an act of national homage to Him for the unspeakably precious benefits conferred by the ministrations of the gospel? This, at least, is the principle of Establishments.

The assertion that "neither priests nor rulers had power to collect them (the tithes) by legal pains," is purely gratuitous. The power referred to is necessarily involved in the very fact of a legal enactment. No one knows this better than do the authors of the manifesto, as Dr Cairns, in his joint-letter to Dr James Buchanan, says of the Act ratifying the Confession, that inasmuch as it was an Act of Parliament, it armed the magistrate with power to enforce it. "*Consequently,*" they say, "the Act of Ratification, 1649, was the *enforcement* of creed and catechisms by the civil power." But they must have read the Scriptures to very little purpose before they could make the assertion that rulers had no legal power to enforce payment of the

tithes; for we find that Hezekiah, with the approval of God, "*commanded* the people that dwell in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord." It is quite true that we have no recorded instance of civil pains and penalties having been actually inflicted in any case for refusal to pay, and that for the very *good* and *obvious* reason that there were no *refractory Voluntaries* among the people, who were disposed to put their consciences between them and the payment of a lawful assessment. On the contrary, it is written, "And as soon as the *commandment* came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first-fruits of corn," &c. (2 Chron. xxxi. 4-6).

*The prophecies.* "The prophecies," the authors of the manifesto say, "in which kings and rulers are represented as doing homage to Christ, are to be interpreted of an homage consistent in its matter and form with the interests and law of His kingdom." Precisely; and if that homage is represented as involving the promotion of the welfare of the Church of Christ, and the giving of the national resources for that end, then these things cannot be inconsistent with the interests and law of Christ's kingdom. To show this, which it will not be difficult to do, is to prove that *the prophecies*, as well as the institutions of the Old Testament,

are in favour of the Establishment principle and against Voluntaryism. The authors of the manifesto do not quote any of the prophecies, but content themselves with asserting what in their judgment "they plainly indicate." It would have been more satisfactory had they just quoted one or two of the more prominent prophecies, and left the intelligent reader to judge for himself what they mean, or how far they can be considered as *plainly indicating* what they allege. What they have omitted we shall supply.

In Psalm lxxii., which contains a prophecy regarding the extent and glory of the kingdom of Christ, we meet with the following announcement: "The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (vers. 10, 11.) That these words speak of the subjection of nations and their rulers, *as such*, to Christ, and the consecration of their resources to the advancement of His kingdom, it is worse than useless to deny. Voluntaries, by attempting to maintain, in opposition to every commentator of name, that the reference in this place is to the private benefactions of kings, and not to their offerings as possessors of kingly authority, only expose their own ignorance, and afford a fresh illustration of the desperate

efforts to which the advocates of an unscriptural dogma will resort in its behalf. This prophecy, as every intelligent reader will observe, plainly indicates that the consecration of the resources of a nation toward the promotion of the kingdom or Church of Christ is not inconsistent with its "interests and law," as it is predicted that it shall one day be done in a way that is honouring to Christ, and for the highest good of the nations.

Another prophecy referring to gospel times is found in Isa. xlix. 23—"And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers: they shall bow down to thee," &c. The attempt made in former days by Mr Marshall and other Voluntaries (and it is the only one ever made), to evade the force of this passage as an argument in favour of the scriptural nature of the Establishment principle, was so childish, that, unless the Voluntaries of the present day shall choose to reproduce it, we should consider it an insult to their understandings to make the smallest allusion to it. If these words have any intelligible meaning, they plainly declare that kings, as such, are specially to care for and interest themselves about the prosperity and advancement of the kingdom or Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the view taken of the passage by every commentator of note. Rivetus, in speaking of it, says,

“The Church is compared to orphans and pupils, whose tutelage and guardianship it is the magistrate’s duty to undertake, which certainly he cannot do, if, *in his administration*, he is excluded from all care of religion.” Thomas Scott, on the place, says, “Kings would become foster-fathers, and queens nursing-mothers to the children of Zion, accounting it their honour and privilege to use their influence and authority to promote the success of the gospel; rendering the most profound respect for the Church; not attempting to have dominion over her faith, but subserving her comfort and prosperity, and showing her honour, for the Lord’s sake, proportioned to the contempt and indignity with which she had been treated.”

This passage plainly indicates that the care, countenance, and support of the Church of Christ by kings, as such, is not only consistent with its “interests and law,” but is what will yet be realised in gospel times, to the glory of God and the true good of the nation. And what it is thus declared that God shall bring about for the good of the Church and the nations of the earth, is what He would have nations and their rulers do now. Certainly it strangely contrasts with all our ideas of a “nursing-father,” and a “nursing-mother,” for the rulers of the nations to act upon the Voluntary principle, and let the Church alone—to take nothing to do with what concerns

its welfare—to make no provision for its advancement—to do no more for it than for any other society—and to be as indifferent to its prosperity, in so far as any public measures for its behalf are concerned, as if it had no existence!

There is also the remarkable prophecy in Isa. lx. 9-13, 16, 17; but without dwelling upon it, we shall conclude with the words of the late Dr M'Crie, who says, "We might have urged here that the whole tenor of the declarations, promises, and predictions of the Old Testament lead to the conclusion that Christianity shall be owned, countenanced, and supported in a *national* way. God addresses the nations in a collective capacity, reproves them for their idolatry, and calls them to His worship (Isa. xxxiv. 1; xli. 1, 21-29). He proposes Christ as His anointed servant to them (Isa. xlii. 1); declares that He has given Him the nations for His inheritance, and that He shall inherit them all (Ps. ii. 8; lxxxii. 8; Isa. lii. 15; lv. 5). Christ addresses Himself not only to individuals, but to whole islands (Isa. xlix. 1); nations join themselves to Him, own and worship Him (Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1, 2; Zech. ii. 11; viii. 20-22); bless themselves, and glory in Him (Jer. iv. 2); all nations and dominions serve him (Dan. vii. 14, 27); they consecrate all things in them, and employ them in His service (Isa. lx. 6-12; Zech. xiv. 20, 21); He owns those nations as His, and

blessees them, while He breaks in pieces and wastes others (Ps. xxxiii. 12; cxlv. 15; Isa. xix. 25; Ps. ii. 9, 12; Isa. lx. 12).” \* In short, the prophecies of the Word clearly indicate that as the Church was once established by God’s command, it shall again be established by His authority, when “all kings shall fall down before Him (Messiah); all nations shall serve Him,” and He shall be acknowledged and submitted to as “the Governor among the nations,”—“the Desire of all nations.”

\* “Statement,” &c., pp. 140, 141.

## VIII.

### NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING.

*The State Church system is opposed to the teaching of the New Testament.* This is the next ground on which it is attempted to show that it is *opposed to the rules and examples of Scripture.* The system which, according to the manifesto, is “contrary to Old Testament *institutions*” is here declared to be “opposed to the *teaching* of the New Testament.” Why it should be said to be opposed to the *teaching* of the one Testament, and only to the *institutions* of the other, we are not informed. The authors of the manifesto have, no doubt, a reason for drawing this *distinction*; but, in the absence of their own explanation, we may be allowed to say that it quadrates with the representation we have given of the natural and necessary tendency of their doctrine regarding the theocracy, which is to set aside the Old Testament as a rule of faith and practice for us. Therefore it is, as we understand the manifesto, only with the typical institutions and characters of the Old, as these are explained by the teaching of the New Testament that we have anything to do. The

authors of the manifesto cannot, with any show of reason or truth, deny that the whole tenor of the *teaching* of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, goes to explain and to enforce the duty of men in their corporate capacity, no less than as individuals, to honour and serve God and to advance His kingdom and glory in the world,—which is just the Establishment principle; and therefore, as it would be rather awkward for a Christian Church to maintain that the Old Testament Scriptures have no binding obligation upon us, they conveniently omit all allusion to their *teaching*, and confine attention to their institutions. With this passing allusion to a phraseology, which in this carefully prepared document must have been purposely adopted, we shall proceed with the consideration of the next point brought before us—the teaching of the New Testament—which it will be as easy to demonstrate to be in favour of the Establishment principle and against Voluntaryism, as it has been to prove this to be the case with the institutions of the Old Testament.

“*The law was a schoolmaster until Christ.*”  
Granted. It was a schoolmaster appointed by Christ, and under its tuition principles and lessons were to be conveyed to the Church and the world, which were to have a world-wide and permanent bearing. Accordingly, when Christ Himself ap-

peared in our world, and began to unfold the grand characteristics of His kingdom, He specially guarded against the idea that His was a mission of destruction, such as the authors of the manifesto seem to represent it. "Think not," He says, "that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; *I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*" He was to take up, as we may say, in Himself all the great principles and lessons of the law, that they might be more fully illustrated and developed in His kingdom. Now, if the law taught anything, we have found that it taught, on the one hand, the duty of the nation and its rulers to recognise and support the Church; and, on the other, that such recognition and support were not destructive of the distinct and independent jurisdiction of either within its own proper sphere. And after this schoolmaster had *faithfully*, in obedience to His command, inculcated and enforced this lesson, under different forms of administration, throughout a period of four thousand years, it would be passing strange should the Lord Jesus Christ himself set up a system which would have the effect not only of neutralising those lessons, but virtually of passing censure upon the schoolmaster for inculcating them. The authors of the manifesto are shrewd enough to perceive that the only way to get over

this is to confine the *instruction* of the law within the limits of the dispensation that is past, and to maintain that its instructions were exclusively adapted to, and designed for, those who lived under it.

Without referring to what we have already said in refutation of this opinion, the answer to it is furnished by the authors of the manifesto themselves, when they speak about "everything but *moral principles and eternal lessons*" having been abolished. They indeed confine these *principles and lessons* to one favouring Voluntaryism, as they imagine, and opposing Establishments; but it is enough for our present argument that they allow that there are principles and lessons inculcated by the law which still remain under the gospel. Now the principle of a National Establishment of religion is so clearly and fully taught under the law, which no one can deny, that it is far from unreasonable to expect, to say the least, that Christ and His apostles would have expressly declared that this principle, which was so strikingly exhibited under the old dispensation, had been abolished under the new, so as to be no longer binding upon nations and their rulers, *if they really meant us to understand this*. Of this, however, we have not the smallest indication. Then, moreover, it is a *moral principle*, and therefore it must have survived the general destruction, and will be found

by the authors of this manifesto, if they institute a more careful and intelligent search, among "the moral principles and eternal lessons" which, according to them, have not perished. It is there that we find it. And we can only say that, with the Old Testament Scriptures in our hands—everywhere and in every possible way enforced in the New Testament as "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness"—to imagine that a prominent and all-pervading moral element in their teaching has been set aside under the gospel as *now* fraught with consequences the most disastrous to both Church and State, and not even a hint to this effect given by Christ, though telling us that He had not come to destroy the law and prophets—nor by His apostles, when insisting on their divine inspiration—would involve a conclusion too monstrous for even a Voluntary to entertain.

The Jews, as a people, were in the habit of associating religion with an Establishment, and they regarded that Establishment as the greatest blessing to their land, which also they were plainly taught by many types and prophecies to believe would continue to exist, in its grand characteristics, under the reign of Messiah. If, therefore, as Christian Voluntaries teach us, an Establishment

is such a bane to Christianity—an invasion of the rights of God and man—opposed to all Scripture—injurious to the interests of religion—degrading and demoralising to the ministers and professors of the gospel—and a gross injustice, surely it is very extraordinary that the Lord should, when revealing His kingdom, have omitted most emphatically to warn them against an evil so great, and one into which, with their previous training, they would very naturally, and almost by necessity, fall.

“But,” as it has been said, “while many Jewish prejudices are guarded against, and that with the greatest possible care, the most fatal of them all—this unavoidable attachment to that which we are told in an endless variety of forms is inconsistent with the nature of religion, hostile to the spirit of the gospel, opposed to the authority of Christ, and, in short, worse than either tongue or pen can describe—is not guarded against at all; or, if there be a single verse of Scripture against Establishments, that warning is given so obscurely, that for many ages the ablest expounders of Scripture have never suspected its presence; and now that the opponents of Establishments have been at much pains to elucidate the matter, the ablest expositors are unable to see it yet.”

This is still further unaccountable when we consider that the Church was not only established under the Jews by divine command, but that religion was established among all nations who had any institutions at all; so that when men embraced the gospel in any considerable numbers, and its principles began to leaven the community,

they would very naturally, and almost of necessity, be led to entertain the idea of establishing it. Surely in such circumstances we might expect to find a distinct and emphatic warning given by Christ and His apostles against a system so fatal to the interests of conscience and religion—of both Church and nation—as Establishments are represented by Voluntaries to be. But, instead of this, we find the principles of national religion, as set forth in the Old Testament, clearly recognised by Christ and His apostles.

Such, then, is the teaching of the law of nature, and such the teaching of the law as revealed in the Old Testament regarding the duty of nations toward religion and the Church, that, on the supposition that an Establishment under the gospel is a fatal evil which ought at all hazards to be opposed, the most express and unequivocal condemnation of such an institution was certainly demanded. While, on the opposite supposition, we should expect that Christ and His apostles should, as they do in other matters, proceed upon it as already conclusively settled, which is just what we find them actually doing. In other words, the new economy recognises and confirms the teachings of the law, which *was a schoolmaster until Christ*.

The authors of the manifesto, however, take a very different view of the pedagogy of the law. Its

grand purpose, as they represent it, must have been to lodge in the minds of its pupils "the principle of liberty of conscience and of free-will offerings,"—as this is all that remains under the new economy, so far as we can gather, in the way of "moral principles and eternal lessons,"—as the fruit of its instruction. It does not seem to have occurred to the authors of the manifesto that this, which, according to them, is the great ineradicable principle, was communicated by the law *in connection with an Establishment of religion*, and not with its opposite. We may here ask them if the course thus pursued with such signal success, as they allow, was not the very opposite of that which would have suggested itself to them as likely to produce such a result? Would they ever think of attempting to inculcate the principle of liberty of conscience and of free-will offerings in connection with an Establishment of religion? And yet this is the very thing which the Lord did under the law, the Voluntary manifesto itself being witness. And if Christ did thus under the old economy, in connection with an Establishment, root the Church in the belief of "the principle of liberty of conscience and of free-will offerings," surely it cannot be absolutely necessary under the new economy to sweep away everything in the form of an Establishment of religion in order to the

continued existence and further development of that principle. The authors of the manifesto will surely allow that it is not impossible for Christ to conserve the "principle of liberty of conscience and of free-will offerings" in connection with an Establishment under the new economy, any more than it was for Him to do this under the old, notwithstanding that it may appear to them very incongruous.

It may serve their purpose to introduce the new economy under the character of a great system of disestablishment and disendowment; but this, according to our ideas, is scarcely consistent with the representation given of the law as a *school-master*, and we suggest whether, in such a case, a *scaffolding*, though not the scriptural, might not have been the more appropriate metaphor for the authors of the manifesto to have adopted; or, perhaps better still, that of a tree, under whose shadow the Church and nation sheltered themselves, and of whose fruit they partook for many a long year, as they speak of "the whole old growth being cleared down to the roots." As it stands, there is certainly a strange confusion of metaphor when it is said that "the whole old growth" of the law as "a schoolmaster" is "cleared down to the roots." Letting this pass, the authors of the manifesto seem to found upon the fact of the Church under the New Testament being catholic,

and not confined as of old to one nation, as justifying them in their opposition to National Establishments of religion. But though the Jewish nationality and Church fell together, they forget that the very cause of the nation's ruin was their rejection of Him who was their King. And therefore the doom of that highly-favoured nation is a warning to all nations to whom the gospel comes to take heed—as they would not that it should become a burdensome stone to them—that they submit themselves to Him whose gospel it is, and use all means competent to them for securing, with God's blessing, that its salutary influence have free course, and be diffused through all orders and departments of society; and to remember that the interests of the Church and nation are so joined together that there is no surer way for a nation to hasten its own destruction than to reject Christ, or to refuse to countenance His Church.

Further, in regard to what they find at the root. It is somewhat difficult to understand how they make the discovery. But it may not be without interest to look for a little at the Voluntary principle which the authors of the manifesto discover *there* when the old growth is cleared away. *Liberty of conscience and free-mill offerings* in a Voluntary sense. This is what they find. "Conscience" and "offerings." This is what is

“continued under the new economy.” There has certainly been a “clearing down to the root,” when all that is left is bare humanity—*soul and body—conscience and offerings*. The apostle speaks of “a worldly sanctuary,” with its “gifts and sacrifices,” and “carnal ordinances,” which could not purge the conscience; and modern Voluntaries, apparently laying hold of this idea, have come to the conclusion that the grand design of the law was to indoctrinate the Church in the carnal and spiritual elements which are united in the constitution of its members; and having thoroughly accomplished the work which was committed to it as a schoolmaster, when the new economy comes and removes the scaffolding of the law, or *clears away “the old growth,”* it finds this twofold idea to have taken hold of the Church as the grand result of the law’s teaching—*liberty of conscience and free-will offerings*. The new economy is, we presume, the development of this idea in accordance with Voluntary principles. This lesson, which, as we gather from the manifesto, is the grand result of the law’s teaching, is only adapted, of course, to the Church militant—the Church triumphant *leaves the offerings behind* to be looked after by those who, in their zeal against the State Church system, are always reminding us that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink;” and our only

regret is, that it has not been able to leave a *like amount of conscience*, that men might distinguish between right and wrong—truth and error—liberty and licence—duty and interest. For, after all, it is the want of conscience fully as much as the want of offerings which we have to deplore in the Church of our day. But we have already disposed of the plea of conscience, and have also shown how free-will offerings perfectly consist with an Establishment of religion; and in doing these things we have proved that, in order to conserve them, the new economy had not to reject but to accept the teachings of the law as a schoolmaster regarding the relation which should subsist between a nation and its rulers and the Church of Christ.

We shall next consider the gross and misleading statement by which the authors of the manifesto attempt to prejudice the minds of their readers against the State Church system. “It is not, indeed, pretended,” they say, “that the New Testament Church had any features of resemblance to State Churches.” This statement is very, it may be, designedly, ambiguous. It may obviously mean that a Church, by becoming allied with the State, loses all the features of a Church of Christ, so as to become, in fact, a synagogue of Satan. Now, although this was implied, if not asserted, in what was said during the Voluntary controversy, and

may possibly be what is meant to be understood by the statement on which we are commenting, it was certainly never allowed by the friends of Establishments that the Church unchurched herself by entering into friendly relations with the State, or that she lost any of the features of a true Church of Christ by so doing. On the contrary, it has always been maintained that a Church never has the features of the Church of Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice more clearly delineated than when, as a kingdom having an independent spiritual jurisdiction, she is allied with the State. Or the statement may mean that the friends of Establishments do not venture to maintain that the Church, during the time of Christ and His apostles, was actually established by law, and so formally set up as a Civil Establishment of religion. That, of course, is a matter of history. It either was, or it was not; and there can be no room for dubiety in the mind of any one who has a well-authenticated record of the facts in his hands; and that the Church of Christ was not an Established Church during the time of Christ and His apostles, or for long after, no one for a moment denies. But while that is perfectly true as a matter of fact, and just what we might have expected in the circumstances, the question is, Was it right as a matter of duty? Ought the nations to have

dealt thus with the Church of Christ? Had they known Christ and His Church as they ought to have done, would they have treated Him or it as they did? Had the kings of the earth and the rulers been truly wise, would they have consulted together, and set themselves against the Lord and His Anointed as they did? Or would they not rather have kissed the Son, and served Him with fear, and used their influence and authority in promoting the welfare of His kingdom, the Church? The fact that the Church was not established at the time referred to, does not certainly prove that it ought not to have been established; any more than the fact that the nations and their rulers generally at that time rejected the gospel, proves that they were right in so doing. All that can be proved from the fact stated is, that the Church of Christ is not so dependent on the countenance and aid of the State that it cannot exist and flourish without it, yea, notwithstanding its cruellest persecutions. But will the authors of the manifesto venture to maintain that the converse is true—that the nations of this world can *really* flourish without the Church of Christ? Or will they maintain as matter of fact, that the prophecy has not been literally fulfilled in the history of all those nations that refused to acknowledge Christ and His Church—“The nations that will not serve thee shall perish?”

If these things are so, then, instead of being matter of congratulation that the Church was not countenanced by the State during the time of Christ and His apostles, it ought rather to be referred to with pain and sorrow by every true Christian. Moreover, will the authors of the manifesto pretend to say that the nations and their rulers who not only refused to acknowledge Christ and His Church, but persecuted them, were not, at that very time, actively supporting a religious system of their own? And does not this very fact, that they had an established religion of their own, of a very different character from that of the gospel Church, to the maintenance of which they had consecrated their lives, sufficiently account for their not only refusing to establish that Church, but doing what they could to destroy it?

What, then, is the light which the history of the state of things during that period sheds upon the question under consideration? Is it that the Establishment principle is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament, and that nations and their rulers ought not to favour and support the true religion and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or is it not rather that it is manifestly impossible for nations and their rulers to occupy a state of neutrality in regard to such matters? According to the word of Christ, which is applicable to

nations as well as individuals, "He that is not for me is against me;" and if so, then the only course open to the rulers in the time of Christ, if they were not to continue in sin, and fight against God, was to have been done with their false religion, to embrace the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to foster and promote it in every way competent to them as rulers. The Church of Christ is diverse from all other kingdoms and institutions; and the only way of securing, under God, that nations and their rulers will not actively and sinfully oppose and resist it, is to get them, through God's blessing, to embrace, defend, and promote it. Hence, in the Second Psalm, the nations and their rulers are not only called upon to desist from their cruel and vain hostility to the truth, but to kiss the Son, and serve Him. And hence, also, the ten horns in Revelation, which "make war with the Lamb," when they are overcome, not only leave off to war against Him, but become active instruments in His hand in promoting His cause, by destroying the mystic Babylon. The following words of Alexander Henderson, in his sermon before the House of Lords, in May 1645, on the famous text of Voluntaries, "My kingdom is not of this world," should be pondered by every *thoughtful* and *intelligent* Christian reader.

"I come," he says, "to the fourth use for instruction in

such duties as are required of us all at this time, and after a special manner of *those that are in high places*. *First* of all, seeing the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, *but* is a spiritual kingdom, it is a necessary duty to study the nature, and search into the mysteries and secrets, of this kingdom. *Secondly*, When the Lord hath opened the eyes of our understandings to behold somewhat of the secrets of this spiritual kingdom, we are to draw near, to join ourselves with it, and become the subjects of Jesus Christ. *Thirdly*, the third duty is, that when we are acquainted with the nature and secrets of the kingdom of Christ, and are now become His willing subjects, then to be zealous in using all good means, each one *according to his place, for advancing and establishing the kingdom of Christ*" (p. 21).

The circumstance that Christ, when setting up His kingdom, did not, as matter of fact, dispose the hearts of rulers to embrace it, and formally establish it, as He might have done had He so pleased, no more proves that He never designed that nations and their rulers, as such, should embrace and legally sanction it, than the fact that those whom He chose as His apostles were in general illiterate and poor, proves that He designed that none but such as are poor and illiterate should be employed as ministers of the gospel.

The disestablishment committee of the United Presbyterian Church have, in their wisdom, come to be decidedly of opinion that if Christ had meant that nations and their rulers should promote His truth and establish His Church, He would have set up an Established Church; but inasmuch as

He did not adopt this course, they conclude that His design must have been to teach us that His Church was never to receive civil sanction and support, but that they should always continue in a state of separation from each other—that, in short, it was not designed by Christ that His Church should mould or influence the State, any more than in their judgment it was designed that the State should aid and support the Church; for the Church, according to the authors of the manifesto, is a religious society, which is “divinely adapted to exist and work out its ends freely everywhere, in harmony with the just arrangements and order of civil life.” Now, this notion of the relation which should subsist between Church and State is that they should absolutely leave each other alone. This, however, is an idea which cannot be realised; for, granting that the Church is to work “in harmony with the just arrangements and order of civil life,” then these arrangements must be such as to admit of the Church’s working out its ends in harmony with them; and this implies that the nature and limits of the jurisdiction of each be clearly defined and recognised. The State is entitled to know what are the ends which the Church proposes to work out, and the Church is entitled to obtain a guarantee from the State that it approves of these ends. In other words, there

must be a definite creed on the part of the Church, and distinct statutory enactment on the part of the State, even for the safe enjoyment of toleration. But we deny that this affords a just representation of the work of the Church. It is not of the accommodating character here indicated by Christian Voluntaries—keeping itself, so to speak, very much by itself, and working out its ends without affecting in any way the just arrangements of civil life. On the contrary, in working out its ends in any community, the Church pervades it with principles which so mould its institutions and arrangements as to bring them into harmony with the mind and will of Christ, and to make them subservient to the highest good of the people. And this cannot but result in a national recognition and furthering of the truth, or in direct antagonism between Church and State.

## IX.

### “EXAMPLE AND TEACHING OF CHRIST AND APOSTLES.”

“WE best know,” say the authors of the manifesto, “what Jesus meant by what He did and taught.” They then quote one of their famous voluntary texts (John xviii. 36)—“My kingdom is not of this world;” a very precious text, which is most ignorantly or perversely wrested from its obvious meaning and design when employed by Voluntaries to support their unscriptural dogma. Before showing this, we would make a remark on the marginal index as given above. It might have better subserved the interests of truth, and saved the authors of the manifesto from exposing themselves by entering on the ground of Scripture at all, had they only proposed the matter to themselves in the following way, when about to deal with the Old Testament—*The example of those who were types of Christ, and the teaching of Christ and prophets.* As the teaching of Christ and prophets and the typical examples of the Old Testament are *virtually allowed* by the authors of the manifesto to be in *favour of Establishments*, by their attempts

to get rid of the one and their *profound silence* regarding the other ; they must be more thoroughly blinded by Voluntary prejudice than even we can conceive possible, had they ventured, after putting the matter thus before their minds, to make even the attempt to show that the example *and teaching of Christ and apostles* is in *favour of Voluntaryism* and against Establishments. In such circumstances, it had been nothing short of an attempt to show that the teaching of *Christ and apostles* contradicted that of *Christ and prophets*.

If this were present to the minds of those who drew up the manifesto, we can conceive no other reason for their not stating the matter as we have indicated—certainly the most natural and obvious way of putting it—except that they saw that by so doing they would have rendered it hopeless to attempt to make out a case on behalf of Voluntaryism from the New Testament, which would be entertained by any really intelligent Christian in the kingdom. It would never have done, for example, to have confessed that the teaching of *Christ and prophets* is in favour of Establishments, and then to have proposed to prove that the *teaching of Christ and apostles* is against them. Until, therefore, the authors of the manifesto really can prove that the *teaching of Christ and prophets* is against Establishments and in favour of Voluntaryism, we might

decline to enter with them on their New Testament argument. But, as we know that they never will dare to make the attempt,—by waiting for their demonstration we would deprive ourselves of the opportunity of exposing them on what they consider specially their own ground,—we shall meet them upon it.

“We best know,” say the authors of the manifesto, “what Jesus meant by what He did and taught.” What then did He teach? He taught, they say, that His kingdom was not of this world. He said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world;” and having said that, the whole controversy is at an end! In saying that, He virtually said, according to the authors of the manifesto (for the text cannot otherwise avail for their purpose), My kingdom is not *in* this world. For it is quite evident to every one, that as long as it is *in this world*, it must have something to do with the world; its officers and assemblies require worldly things for their maintenance; and the supplying of these things by the State can, in itself, no more affect the character of Christ’s kingdom than the supplying of them by voluntary contributions. The one has as great tendency, perhaps greater, to secularise the Church, and make it a worldly kingdom, as the other. It is an extraordinary thing that money coming in any way through the

State to the Church, even though it should be bestowed upon it as a free, independent, spiritual kingdom, necessarily transforms it into a *kingdom of this world*, according to Voluntaryism, while money given by the people, no matter how *worldly*, should, in the estimation of Voluntaries, have no such effect. His Church, however, was no more a kingdom of this world under the Old Testament than it is under the New. And if its spiritual independence was in no way infringed or destroyed by its being countenanced and supported by the State then, there is no reason, in the nature of things, why it should be otherwise when allied with the State now.

The fact is, the saying of Christ affords not the slightest conceivable countenance to Voluntaryism; but, on the contrary, in so far as it can be referred to in connection with the controversy, it may be shown to favour the Establishment principle. When He uttered these memorable words, the Great Head of the Church stood before Pontius Pilate, who was about to countenance the withdrawal of the support and protection of the law from Him and His cause; but before doing this he addresses himself to Jesus, saying, "Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered Thee unto me; what hast thou done?" It was in answer to this that Jesus said, "My kingdom is

not of this world." And that man must be a rare expositor of Scripture, or he must have a curious power, if we may so say, of voluntaryising all he looks at, who can discover the Voluntary principle in this memorable saying. As if Christ had not specially before Him, when uttering these words, the dream of the Jews regarding the kingdom of Messiah as a worldly kingdom which was to subject to its power the nations of the earth! As if it were not His special design to allay the fear which had been awakened in the mind of Pilate concerning His being the King of the Jews, by declaring that His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, diverse from all secular kingdoms, so that these kingdoms had nothing to fear, but everything that was good to expect from it! As if He had not present to His view, when uttering these words, the friendly relation which so long subsisted between His Church and the Jewish nation, as that which will and ought to exist between His Church and every nation to which the gospel comes that *does not sinfully reject Him*, as the Jews were then doing! As if the fact of its being a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world, were not the very thing that rendered it capable of entering into an alliance with the State! Or as if this were not the very thing that laid an obligation upon nations and their rulers to recognise and support it!

Dr M'Farlane, of Greenock, in a sermon preached at the opening of the Assembly in 1835, says in reference to this text:—"It was Christ's intention to announce to Pilate, and through him to every civil ruler that should live on the face of the earth, that unless the civil magistrate heard His voice, and became a subject of His spiritual kingdom, and used his utmost efforts for its advancement in the earth, he was not of the truth, and would infallibly perish with those who would not have Christ to reign over them. 'Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.' The peasant that is of the truth heareth my voice, and bows the knee to me, . . . and in his family . . . makes known the truth. . . . The prince that is of the truth heareth my voice, and amidst all the splendour of a court, and all the pomp of royal honour and dignity, thinks it his highest honour to be a subject of the King of kings, and the instrument in His hands of *promoting or extending* His spiritual kingdom" (p. 28).

Alex. Henderson, in the sermon referred to at page 150, says:—

"Kings and great ones are troubled at the kingdom of Christ, because they conceive the advancing of Christ's kingdom to be a diminution of their greatness and power; where-in they betray both *ignorance* and *ingratitude*. *Ignorance* of the nature of His kingdom, which is spiritual, not only in the

internal but external part of it. He that would *establish* a spiritual kingdom doth not take away, but, on the contrary, doth both *confirm* and *sanctify* the temporal kingdom wherein it is established. *Ingratitude*, not only because by Him kings reign, but Jesus Christ having proclaimed a jubilee, a great liberty to kings and kingdoms from the tyranny and servitude, the usurpations and impositions of the Pope. This is all the thanks that they return—that they either put away the gospel from themselves and their kingdoms, or will receive just as much of it as they think meet, which is rather to reign over Christ than that Christ and His sceptre reign over them.”

When our Lord, then, in witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate, says, “My kingdom is not of this world,” He affirms that in its origin, offices, laws, judicatories, and special objects, it is heavenly and spiritual, altogether different from the kingdoms of this world; but He does not say, nor can He with any show of reason be understood to say, that on this account they cannot mutually befriend and help each other. The Church of Christ is not of this world, but she is *in* it. Her constitution and laws are from heaven, yet is she visibly erected on the earth. And the earth is represented in Revelation as helping “the woman.” As Willison, of Dundee, remarks:—

“There will still be something *earthly* in the Church as long as she is upon the earth. Seeing then there is still something earthly, and which needeth *earthly support* [and none know this better than Dissenters], even in the gospel Church, I would fain know, why she is not capable of receiving favour and assistance from the magistrate, with respect to that

*earthly part*, as well as the Church of *Israel*? She has preachers, &c., to maintain; and if the magistrate, as a kind '*nursing-father*,' shall contribute his assistance to provide these necessities for the gospel Church, is it not a strange imagination that this doth *change her nature*, or turn her to an earthly Church, or a *kingdom of this world*? Will any man say that this kind assistance doth lessen her spirituality? Nay, doth it not rather add thereto, in regard that spiritual instruction and gospel preaching is thereby increased and spread all over the land?"—(Defence of National Churches, pp. 225–227.)

And further, will any man venture to say that the system of ministerial support, which makes every man dependent on his own congregation, has no tendency to lessen her spirituality, and curtail her means of usefulness? Or will any man say that there is *no* truth in the following representation of Dissenting ministers, given the other day by one of themselves? "Dissenting ministers are the mere paid agents of the society, whose services may be retained or dispensed with at any time. Instead of being over the people, they are under them, and thus the divine order is completely reversed. They are down-trodden, and often sent to an untimely grave. All Dissenting ministers must be strong political partisans, or they are nowhere; and many Dissenting congregations had now become nothing less than half-religious, half-political clubs." How, we ask, does such a picture as that consist with the opinion that it is under the Voluntary system that the memorable saying of

Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world," is alone to be clearly and fully carried out? The thing is supremely ridiculous in point of interpretation, and absolutely false as matter of fact.

Having taken from them this text, in which Voluntaries think they have found a fulcrum secure enough on which to rest the lever whereby they expect to overthrow the whole system of Establishments,—a text in regard to which Dr Andrew Thomson said, it had been so sounded forth in every meeting-house, and synod-house, and session-house, "that were a person to pop his head into any of these places, *even when empty*, his ears would be immediately assailed with the *echo*, '*not of this world,*'"—we have next to look at the no less famous nor less frequently reiterated texts, 1 Cor. ix. 1-14 and Gal. vi. 6, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." Here we have another illustration of the strange *conjuring power* of Voluntaryism. Its advocates first quote the text of which we have just disposed, to prove that the kingdom of Christ, or the Church, being a spiritual kingdom, cannot without destroying its character and usefulness receive any pecuniary aid from the kingdoms of this world. And after having done this, to their own satisfaction, they refer to another class of texts, of which the one

we have quoted is a sample, which manifestly teach that though the Church is not of this world, it is *in* this world—and has, notwithstanding its spirituality, a connection with the men and things of this present world. Its spirituality, according to the authors of the manifesto, raises it above receiving any money from the nation, no matter how thoroughly it may be pervaded with Christian principle in all its actings; but it does not raise it above the necessity of obtaining worldly things from men who may be very far indeed from being actuated by its holy and spiritual principles. And it is no answer to this to say that the nation, whose carnal things she dares not receive, is not the Church, as are the people whose carnal things she does receive. It is enough for our argument that the Church is not so spiritual in all pertaining to it as to be independent of all connection with the things of earth. For if its spirituality is not destroyed by its connection with the carnal things of its members, no more can its spirituality be appealed to as inconsistent with its receiving the carnal things of the nation.

But more than this: in order to avoid the awkwardness of the second class of texts—(*e.g.*, 1 Cor. ix. 1–14, and Gal. vi. 6)—overthrowing their famous argument from John xviii. 36., the authors of the manifesto would require to do two things, which,

we are persuaded, no one but a Popish priest, or one skilful in the art of conjuring, would even for a moment think of attempting: First, to prove, *as matter of faith*, that the carnal things of the members of the Church cease to be carnal things, and become spiritual, in the process of passing from the pocket of the giver to the treasury of the receiver; and, secondly, to show, *as matter of fact*, that they never do receive, and that it is contrary to their principles to receive, for the Church's support and extension, *the carnal things of any who are outside her pale*, or who are not true spiritual members within her bosom. Until they do both or either of these things they cannot possibly appeal to the spirituality of the Church, or to the fact that it is not of this world, as warranting their conclusion that this excludes it from receiving any aid from national resources. How the spirituality of the Church should not consist with the reception of Government money, while it is perfectly consistent with receiving the money of those who are not members, and that of those who are not truly spiritual members of the Church, is a problem which we should like Christian Voluntaries to solve. It is confessedly a very difficult one, and we are not sure that it might not profitably employ the time of the Joint-Union Committee of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches,—which must, we

presume, be at a loss for work, now that the Mutual Eligibility Scheme is off their hands,—and so prevent their idle hands from finding mischief still to do.

But we have something more to say about the texts quoted in the manifesto. “Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?” (1 Cor. ix. 14, 11). “Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things” (Gal. vi. 6). Are the authors of this document prepared to produce their warrant for excluding the national resources from the means of supporting the ministers of the gospel? This is absolutely necessary, as it certainly does not appear on the face of these texts that any such exclusion is designed; but, on the contrary, as we shall show, from the allusions to the old dispensation in 1 Cor. ix., we should reasonably infer the very opposite. In regard to the first text, we should like to know if the fact of a man being a minister of an Established Church deprives him of his character as a *preacher of the gospel*? If not, then will it be denied that it is as a preacher of the gospel that he draws his stipend? Does he not as truly live of the gospel in the apostolic sense as

does the preacher in a dissenting chapel, who draws his stipend from the pockets of his people? Does the fact that the stipend of the one is made sure to him by an Act of Parliament make it less a payment on account of his preaching the gospel, than does the fact that the stipend of the other is made sure by a legal bond? But further: so far from countenancing Voluntaryism, this passage, both *in itself* and *in its connection*, manifestly points to that mode of support of the gospel ministry which prevails in every scripturally constituted Establishment,—a provision, in other words, such as that which was divinely enjoined under the old dispensation, whereby the minister of the gospel shall obtain support from the national resources, in the way and manner best fitted to preserve his independence on the one hand, and to afford scope for the exercise of private Christian benevolence on the other. It is said, “Even so,” as it was ordained by God under the old dispensation, “hath the Lord ordained” under the new economy: the principle of ministerial support is in both dispensations the same,—a combination of legal provision from the national resources with the free-will offerings of the people: or, to put it otherwise, the *consecration of the public and private resources* of a people enjoying the blessings of the Gospel to the service and glory of God. So

that, whether private or public, they are claimable whenever and wherever it is known that "*the Lord hath need*" of them. This view is further brought out from *the preceding context*, in which the apostle makes use of a threefold comparison, of which Calvin says—"The first is taken from military life, for soldiers are wont to have their provisions furnished to them at the *public expense*. The second from vine-dressers, for the husbandman plants a vine, not to throw away his pains, but to gather the fruit. The third is taken from keepers of cattle, for the shepherd does not lay out his labour for nothing, . . . he is *supported from the produce*."

As to Gal. vi. 6, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things," it covers the other text quoted in the manifesto; and the argument against Establishments which Voluntaries attempt to found upon it is twofold—first, that *the right of the minister to obtain maintenance is limited to his own people*, on whom *alone* the obligation lies to provide it. Now, of course, no one denies that there is an obligation on those who are taught in the word, as the occasion and their circumstances may require and allow, to see to the adequate maintenance of him who ministers among them in holy things. But that the passage so limits the right of the one, or defines the obligation of the other, as the above interpre-

tation implies, is what none but a prejudiced Voluntary can possibly maintain. Suppose, for example, on the one hand, that the minister should be otherwise suitably provided for, so as not to require the aid of the people, or that for some other good reason he sees fit to dispense with their pecuniary assistance, would they still be under an obligation, whether he wanted them or not, to furnish him with the good things of this life? Or suppose, on the other hand, that the people are so poor that, however willing, they are not able to provide a suitable maintenance for him who *teaches them in the Word*, would the minister not have the right to accept of aid from beyond his congregation, that he may be able to live and minister with comfort among that poor people? The expedient of a supplementary fund to aid such cases of necessity is all very well, and, as we think, highly proper; but in adopting it the United Presbyterian Church must give up this text. It will not do to plead for a literal (and, as we consider, forced) interpretation of the text in support of Voluntaryism, and then to act on a principle which virtually condemns their own interpretation, and favours Establishments. But apart from what we have said, is it not manifest to every intelligent reader that this text rather requires than forbids the nation to give of its resources for the support

of the gospel? For if the nation is taught in the Word of God, so as to become pervaded with its salutary influence, does not this text require of the nation that it should, in such circumstances, communicate of its good things unto those who are the instruments of imparting this benefit? Is the nation alone to be relieved from all obligation in connection with the blessings conferred by the faithful ministrations of the gospel? Who gave Christian Voluntaries a *dispensing* power like this?

The second argument founded on this text proceeds on the idea that it confers a *right upon the people* to contribute of their substance towards the maintenance of their minister, of *which* the State Church system deprives them. According to this view of the passage, the words, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate," &c., are equivalent to this, Do not *stand in the way* of him that is taught in the Word communicating, &c. To say nothing of the fact that this is a kind of right, if it be possessed, which very few people will be disposed to enforce; it certainly cannot be an *inde-feasible right*, else we should never have found the apostle, by working with his own hands, depriving the Corinthian Church of it. But to talk of the people having an *exclusive* divine right to maintain their own minister would be to put him entirely at their mercy, and make him of all men the most

enslaved and degraded, and is alike condemned by Scripture and common sense. Instead, therefore, of "those apostolic expositions," which embody, according to the authors of the manifesto, "the supreme law of the Lord Jesus Christ," favouring Voluntaryism, they all point in the very opposite direction.

One would have thought that the reading of the text, "If we have sown unto you *spiritual* things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your *carnal* things?" would have been enough to convince the authors of the manifesto that it is not possible to base an argument on the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ against its having anything to do with the carnal things of earthly kingdoms. But they appear to have no conception of the absurdly ridiculous position they occupy when, in reasoning from the spirituality of the kingdom, as set forth in John xviii. 36, against its acceptance of State support, they introduce the apostle to show that the spirituality of the kingdom is the very thing that lays the strongest obligation on the people to give of their worldly things for its support. The text which speaks of the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ—"My kingdom is not of this world"—bars the carnal things of the State. The other text, which speaks of the spiritual things of the kingdom

—“If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?”—requires the bestowal of the carnal things of the individual. And both texts are therefore against the State Church system. Such is the amazing consistency and power of disestablishment reasoners and reasoning!

## X.

### “THE SUPREME LAW OF CHRIST.”

HAVING quoted the texts which, according to them, contain “the supreme law of the Lord Jesus Christ,” as expounded by the apostles, the authors of the manifesto go on to tell us how “this ordinance” is superseded by the State Church system. It is supremely ludicrous. “It has been superseded,” says the manifesto, “by all State Churches, and glaringly by those in our own land, where ministers are required to live of the rates more than of the gospel, and to partake of the Exchequer rather than of the altar, eating of the fruit of all vineyards and the milk of all flocks but their own.” One is almost at a loss what to say upon this. It is certainly very telling, and we do trust it may produce its legitimate influence on the minds of all who read it! Unfortunately for its authors, it is not based upon fact. In so far as the Establishment in Scotland is concerned, we are not aware of *any rates* that are levied for the

support of the ministers of the Establishment, unless it be the *particles* of the Annuity-tax still *held in solution in the local taxation* of the city, which even Voluntaries have been quietly swallowing for some years without any bad effects ; while, as regards the Exchequer, instead of giving to the Church her own, it is practising that most hateful of all things, in the estimation of the authors of the manifesto, a kind “of circuitous theft,” in withholding thousands a year which properly belong to the Church. Again, as to their eating the fruit of all vineyards and the milk of all flocks but their own, all that we can say is, that they are surely happy men who have the free run of all the vineyards and flocks in the country. We do not wonder should they be objects of envy to many whose Voluntary principles confine them to the milk of their own flock, especially when the supply is either less than is required to meet the shepherd’s wants, or when, as sometimes happens, it dries up altogether. It must certainly be a great comfort in such circumstances when the man knows that he can share in the produce of a neighbour’s flock which may be better conditioned than his own. Besides, as eating bread with a man is generally understood to be a token of friendship, we cannot help thinking that to eat of the fruit of all vineyards and the milk of all flocks, seems to indicate a desire on the part of the

minister of the Establishment to keep on friendly terms with everybody, which should rather be to his credit, in this charitable age; while his not eating of his own, may be owing to the great kindness of his neighbours in fully meeting all his wants.

But seriously, suppose it were true that the ministers of the Establishment were maintained by a tax of which every member of the community had to pay his share, it could not on that account be said, with reason, that they did not live of the gospel or partake of the altar, seeing it was for them, as ministering at the altar, or preaching the gospel, that the tax was levied. It is, however, a mere flight of the imagination to talk about the ministers of the Establishment eating of the fruit of all vineyards, inasmuch as the funds out of which they receive their stipends were originally, as has been shown, as freely and voluntarily bequeathed to the Church, and inalienably secured to her, as any legacy can be now. And their appropriation to other than the purposes for which they were originally bestowed, would be as much an act of injustice and spoliation, as would be the diverting from the United Presbyterian Church of the handsome legacy of the late Mr Henderson of Park, to the purposes of the Improvement Trust.

As to what the authors of the manifesto say about money being got by "any turning of the

screw," we have only to remark, it must undoubtedly be a powerful and influential body that can by the turning of any screw extort money for *any good object* from the hands of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. But more than this, we do maintain that it comes with a very bad grace from men holding Voluntary principles to talk about "turning the screw." Do they know nothing about turning the screw? Is this instrument not frequently had recourse to by them when anxious to partake more abundantly of the fruit of their vineyard? Was it not this very instrument which was made use of so freely and successfully by the early Church in the palmy days of Voluntaryism? Were not the straits and necessities to which the ministers of the Church in the early centuries were often reduced, when *wholly dependent on the support of their people*, one of the causes, at least, which led them to resort to those means for *extracting* from their flocks larger and less precarious incomes, which laid the foundation for that system of priestcraft which is wrought with such diabolical skill and power by the Man of Sin?

Neither will it do for the descendants of the Lawsons and Frasers of a past generation, to speak of the "intricate construction of musty documents." If ever there were men who wrested property from the hands of those to whom it *justly* belonged, by

“intricate constructions of musty documents,” and false and misleading statements, it was the Secession Church, at the time of its adopting Voluntary principles. It is matter of history that by a most dexterous manoeuvre they entirely changed their plea, in order to retain their property. But indeed the whole paragraph on which we are commenting appears to us to be nothing short of a foul and slanderous charge against the Establishment, as not over-scrupulous about the means it resorts to for getting money, if only it can get it out of the public purse. If this is what is intended, we have a right to expect the production of the evidence. This will not do. It raises the question whether one Church is at liberty to slander another Church with impunity, any more than an individual his neighbour.

That the teaching of the New Testament shuts out the power of the magistrate *circa sacra*, as that is contended for by the advocates of the Establishment principle, is another of the groundless assertions in which the manifesto so abounds. There is no attempt made to prove this, and we might content ourselves with simply denying it. But it is instructive to contemplate the kind of way in which Voluntaries leap to their illogical conclusions. “The State Church system is opposed to the teaching of the New Testament regarding the magistrate’s.

power." This is the assertion which we emphatically deny. And when we look for something to indicate how the authors of the manifesto have arrived at this conclusion, we are met with the declaration, in which we cordially acquiesce, "The submission required to magistracy . . . is only 'in the Lord;' and both civil authority and civil obedience have their limitations prescribed by the higher law." This, according to them, justifies their assertion! It of course applies, as they say, to the "natural relations;" and if *this higher law* does not exclude, but only limits and directs the authority to be exercised, and the obedience to be rendered in matters of religion in these relations, it is certainly difficult for any man but a Voluntary to understand how *this higher law* requires that the magistrate alone, of all men in authority, is not to be submitted to by those under him, when enjoining anything that tends to advance the interests of true religion and the Church of Christ. We are exhorted to pray "for kings, and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." And as Dr M'Crie says, "What Christians are here to pray for, *that* magistrates must be bound to promote as their end; and this is not simply 'a quiet and peaceable life,' but 'in all godliness and honesty.' Rulers, in their official capacity, are not to be indifferent to godliness

any more than to *honesty*; both are to be countenanced and promoted by them;”\* of course, in subjection to the higher law, and in subserviency to the glory of Him by whom kings reign. But inasmuch as the principles laid down in this manifesto limit the authority of the magistrate to matters of civil jurisdiction, they render it impossible for any one who adopts them to comply with this exhortation of the apostle in any intelligible sense.

Moreover, the magistrate is declared in Romans xiii. to be “the minister of God for good.” And is it conceivable that, in seeking the good of the people as God’s minister, he shall find himself excluded by the higher law from aiming at the advancement of the highest good of the people, by exerting himself, in the way competent to him as a “nursing-father,” to remove all hindrances out of the way of the Church’s progress, and otherwise to lend to it his countenance and support? Moreover, is it possible that the magistrate, placed as he is over rational, accountable, and immortal beings, as God’s “minister to them for good,” can discharge the duties of his office at all, not to say aright, if he is bound to confine himself in all his administrations to “the outward and secular affairs of the community”? Is it not a thought

\* “Statement,” p. 143.

abhorrent to every Christian mind, that God should have appointed an ordinance for the good of men, in which one rational and accountable being is called to occupy a position of influence, trust, and authority over others, constituted like himself, who are with him hastening on to the judgment, and that He should require of him, in discharging the duties of his office, to legislate, as His minister, for the good of those over whom he is placed, just as if they had no higher destiny than the beasts that perish?

It is quite true, as Voluntaries were wont to maintain, that "the virtues which contribute most to the well-being of society, and the greatest happiness of the individuals comprising it, are virtues which the authority of Government cannot confer, such as gratitude, humanity, liberality, brotherly-kindness,—still more, the religious virtues of love to Christ, and love to one another for Christ's sake." But do not Voluntaries perceive that the very fact that these virtues have such an all-important bearing on the good of society, which, as God's minister, the magistrate is required to consult, brings them so under his notice that he not only is not justified in overlooking them, but is called upon to do all in his power to encourage their cultivation? If so, then, though these are not the primary end of his office, it

surely cannot be *beyond his province*, at least, to give countenance and support to those literary, moral, and religious institutions whose special object it is to promote these virtues, if this can be done without destroying their character or constitution? "The kingdoms of this world," says the late Dr Thomson, "must derive the greatest benefit from the Church of Christ erected among them ; not as a passive tool in the hands of rulers, or as an engine contrived by State policy, and worked by its agents, but as an independent moral power which diffuses its influence all around ; and while it so generally forms many for the enjoyment of *heaven*, at the same time makes them, and multitudes besides, the peaceable and profitable members of *earthly* societies. This is not the ultimate tendency of systems of belief or ordinances of worship which are contrary to the revealed will of God."

"Contemplate, then," he says, "the spirit of false religion, of infidelity, error, and superstition, traversing the length and breadth of the land, and withering with its pestilential breath every public and patriotic, as well as every domestic and personal, virtue. And then look at the genius of true religion, entering not only every family, but our halls of justice, walking our market-places, accompanying our fleets and armies, making better husbands and fathers, judges and senators, statesmen and patriots,

captains and soldiers, sailors and merchants ; and shall we indeed say that the Legislature must turn the same cold and blank countenance, the same look of total indifference and disregard to the one as to the other ; that not a nod of recognition and encouragement must be tendered to the one that is not bestowed on the other—that not a smile arising from the perception of superior intrinsic excellences, and arising moreover from a consciousness of benefits, great and valuable, received, must illumine the face when directed to the one, but must beam with equal complacency on the other !” \* Surely, then, if the magistrate is to be a minister of God for good to the community, he must officially interest himself about religion and the Church of Christ.

We might enlarge on this subject, but we have said enough, we believe, in the way of setting aside all that the authors of the manifesto allege against Establishments from the New Testament, and in doing so, have shown that the New as well as the Old Testament is wholly on the side of the principle of Establishments. How, indeed, could it possibly be otherwise, than that *Christ and His apostles* should agree in their teaching with *Christ and His prophets* ? We pass on to the next section, which will not detain us long.

\* “Christian Instructor,” 1830, pp. 718, 719.

## XI.

“THE SYSTEM IS INJURIOUS TO THE INTERESTS OF  
RELIGION.”

THE authors of the manifesto begin by saying, “Of this we might be assured from its unscripturalness.” This, of course, rests the whole question on scriptural grounds, *where it ought to rest*. And hence we have dwelt at considerable length on the evidence against Establishments which they profess to produce from Scripture. But having disposed of this, and proved that the examples and teaching of the whole Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is in favour of the system which the authors of the manifesto condemn, and opposed to that which they support, we might pass from the assertions under the last two sections. The State Church system, being scriptural, cannot possibly be opposed to the interests of religion, nor fraught with political injustice; and the men who talk otherwise would do well to take heed what they say, lest in professing to speak for God they in reality find themselves talking wickedly against Him. We shall, however, hear what the authors of the manifesto have to say

in support of the position laid down. The State Church system, they say, “*secularises, corrupts, debases.*” If these things be so, they have certainly made out their case—it must be “injurious to the interests of religion.” But is it so? Before this can be said to have been established, they would require to produce the clearest and most conclusive evidence; for, in point of fact, God positively and directly sanctioned the system which they thus condemn. In bringing this charge, therefore, against the State Church system, *as such*, it seems very like charging God foolishly. And if they are not to underlie this charge, the authors of the manifesto are bound to substantiate their charge against the system by the most cogent and convincing evidence. Instead of doing this, however,—with the exception of some abuses which specially attach to the existing Establishment in England,—they do not even profess to produce the proof demanded. But what they cannot produce in support of their assertion, we can produce abundantly in falsifying it.

We can appeal to the actual fruits of an Establishment in this highly favoured land of ours, as affording the most conclusive refutation of all the calumnious charges brought against the State Church system by the authors of this manifesto. We question if any man, not to say a committee of professedly Christian men, is entitled, with the

truthful record of history before him, to assert, for example, that "the State Church system makes religion geographical, *without the power of affecting individual faith or practice*;" that "it debases and secularises ecclesiastical life;" that "it rears up a membership without self-reliance or *intelligent interest in religion*, . . . and a clergy more careful of *civil status* than of popular privilege;" that "it builds up churches, not, as has been said, for the poor, but really for the rich and fashionable, with *relaxed discipline, repressed spiritual growth*, slight demands on private liberality and enterprise." Is this truth, or foul slander? We do not ask if any or all of those evils do prevail or have prevailed in connection with any existing Establishment? Do they not prevail to a lamentable extent in connection with dissenting churches? But we fearlessly ask if the history of the Presbyterian Establishment in this country, as compared with other non-established bodies, will, in the judgment of honest, truth-loving, and unprejudiced men, justify the assertion, that the fact of its having been established renders it specially and necessarily chargeable with the evils which the authors of the manifesto so freely hurl against the system? The men who can make such unfounded and reckless assertions are deserving rather of being denounced than reasoned with.

Have the authors of the manifesto not reason enough themselves to discern that if these reckless assertions of theirs are to have any force as arguments against the Establishment, they must be prepared to maintain that they are, have ever been, and must ever be true of an Establishment. Take, for example, the assertion that the State Church system "debases and secularises ecclesiastical life;" or, as it used to be put at the time of the Voluntary controversy, that it "has the direct tendency to pollute the Church with a worthless and indolent ministry." Are the authors of the manifesto prepared, in the face of Christendom, to declare that in their deliberate judgment the ministers of the Establishment are, have ever been, and must ever be, a secular and "debased set of men, who are a pollution to the Church"? If they are not, they can found no argument against Establishments on what they assert; and if they are prepared to assert that, then, whatever may be said about the Establishment principle, Voluntaryism, in such a case, would be clearly chargeable with debasing the moral character of its votaries.

We cannot refute these charges better than in the eloquent language of Dr Robert Buchanan, in a speech at the first annual meeting of the Glasgow Association for Promoting the Interests of the Church of Scotland in 1834. He says:—

"What thus becomes of the charge that the civil establishment of religion necessarily tends to perpetuate error? I say, it tends to perpetuate truth; for while the unestablished creeds of many dissenting churches have, in instances innumerable, sunk, in the course of a few generations, from orthodox Christianity, into the lowest and most undisguised Socinianism [in such circumstances, has not Dr Buchanan, and the majority in the Free Church, good reason to lay to heart his solemn words\*], the established creed of the Church of Scotland—the form of sacred words sanctioned by the Legislature in 1567—has come down, amplified and extended, but not altered, through a period of 270 years. . . . So much for the charge that the establishment of religion has a necessary tendency to perpetuate error. But it is said that, by being established, religion is virtually secularised, and altogether corrupted and deformed. . . . Our adversaries may have forgotten that during nearly the whole of the seventeenth century—from 1605, with one short exception, to 1689—the whole energy of an arbitrary government was employed in one continued and powerful attempt to bring the ministers of our National Church under a secular influence; and when anti-Establishment ministers shall have been found successfully to withstand an attempt of equal duration and of equal power to secularise their religious character; when they shall have been found to resist an ungodly people, insisting that smooth things shall be prophesied to please them, and shall come forth after a trial of nearly ninety years with the standard of divine truth as unsullied as that which was waved by the

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\* "Though painful, it is highly instructive to trace the Church's downward career. In doing so, we cannot fail to mark how true it is that all error is on a slope. The first movement in this direction departs from the grand level of truth, and carries the unwary foot over the edge of an inclined plane, which, once entered on, has a constant tendency to hurry the victim on with accelerating rapidity, until, making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, he plunges at last into the depth of a complete apostacy."—Dr Robert Buchanan's *Historical Introduction to the "Scots Worthies,"* p. 50. Blackie & Son.

Camerons, the Cargills, and the Renwicks over the heads of our persecuted forefathers,—then, I say, but not till then, shall we be prepared to admit that there is as little danger of religion being secularised in a Voluntary, as in our Established Church.” (Tremendous applause.)

Were the interests of religion injured or promoted at the time of the Reformation by the planting of churches, schools for the godly upbringing of the young, and universities for the training of youth in *moral philosophy*, and the other branches of a liberal education, with the sanction of the nation and its rulers? We ask any impartial observer to say if there is any reasonable ground for supposing that the blessings of the gospel would ever have been diffused throughout the length and breadth of this land, as they have been, had there been no national recognition and support of the Church? When or where has Voluntaryism ever produced results such as those which have flowed to our land from the Church of the Reformation? It will certainly be a long time before any historian will have to record of the Voluntary system what is recorded of the Established Church at the time of the second Reformation, that “every parish had a minister, every village had a school, every family almost had a Bible. I have lived many years in a parish where I *never heard an oath*, and you might have rode many a mile before you heard one. And the only persons who complained were the taverners;

who complained that their trade was broke, people had become so sober." Is it just, then, to bring a charge against *a system* which has been attended with such results, as being, *in its very nature*, injurious to the interests of religion? Are the men who are not afraid to bring forward such a charge in the face of facts such as these, and others which the Reformed Church of Scotland so plentifully supplies, entitled to be heard in any matter of history or truthful evidence?

We fearlessly assert, that whatever has been done for the advancement of the interests of true and undefiled religion in our land has been accomplished, under God, most signally and efficiently, in connection with the Establishment principle, or the maintenance of the honour of Christ as King of nations and King in Zion. We have already referred to the good accomplished by the Reformed or Established Church. As to the *Seceders*, who kept the lamp of truth burning in our land at a time when great spiritual darkness and deadness prevailed throughout the Establishment, they were all zealous defenders of the Establishment principle; and it is instructive to remark that at the time of, and in connection with, the rejection of that principle and adoption of Voluntaryism by the Secession Church, unsound views on the Atonement sprang up among them, and the general tone of

evangelical life declined. And this has continued to characterise their Church, more or less, ever since; so that Dissenters have always been the grand obstructives and mar-plots of every movement, which every one but themselves saw would have been for the highest good of the nation had it been successfully carried through. Then, again, the good which the *Free Church* has been instrumental in effecting has been notoriously in connection with her maintenance of the Establishment principle both in theory—in her Claim of Rights; and in practice—in her Sustenation Fund; and it remains for the future historian to record the untold evil which will be the inevitable result of her surrendering this principle, and allying herself with the enemies of all national recognition of truth.

The history, therefore, of the Churches in this country, as might have been expected from the nature of the doctrine, teaches that, instead of the principle of Establishments being inimical or in any way injurious to the interests of true religion, it has been ever in proportion to the faithfulness with which the Church has maintained and vindicated this doctrine of Christ's supreme Headship over the Church and nation that she has been owned of her Divine Head, in advancing His kingdom and glory. And as the Establishment principle, or the faithful acknowledgment on the part

of the Church of Christ as King of nations as well as King of Zion, has always been associated with its most remarkable usefulness and success, so we know, as matter of prediction, that it is when "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" and "all nations," as such, "shall serve Him," that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord," and righteousness and peace shall everywhere prevail. It is for this blessed consummation that we labour when contending for the Establishment principle; it is *against this ever being realised* that the Voluntary principle is necessarily set. We may therefore leave all men to judge which is for the injury and which for the advantage of the interests of religion.

We come now to the last section, on which we shall not enlarge.

## XII.

“THE SYSTEM IS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL EQUITY.”

ALTHOUGH the authors of the manifesto in the very beginning, as we said, endeavour to distinguish between themselves and another class of Voluntaries who arrive at the same conclusion through “a due study of the civil constitution”—commonly known as political Voluntaries—the political aspect of the subject has always bulked very largely in the view of all kinds of Voluntaries; and hence we find this manifesto of Christian Voluntaries winding up with an argument from *political equity*! “The rights of conscience,” they tell us, “are not those of a class or sect. . . . The most perfect religious equality can alone meet their just demands;” but they conveniently forget that *the rights of society* are no less sacred than those of conscience; and then, by a strange process of reasoning, which is peculiar to the Voluntary mind, they lay the blame of the national support given to Popery for the last fifty years at the door of the State Church system. “It is,” they say, “the

necessity of meeting the sense of inequality produced by that system," which has given rise to this countenance to the Man of Sin. The recognition and support of the true religion on the part of the State gives it an importance which the advocates of the false religion and Voluntaries do not think just, and therefore, according to them the State is necessitated to give to the false, in order to pacify its votaries. According to this reasoning, the man who specially recognises and favours an honest servant, might find it necessary, in order to meet the inequality thus produced among his servants, to bestow his favours on a dishonest one. But, in the case supposed, it must be perfectly evident, even to a Voluntary, that it is not the master that produces the inequality, if you choose so to term it; he finds the inequality existing in the *honesty* of one servant and the *dishonesty* of another, and instead of ignoring this on the Voluntary principle, and putting the honest servant on a level with the dishonest one, and *thereby levelling down*, or doing the same for the dishonest one as he does for the honest one, and *thereby levelling up*, he proceeds on the sound and scriptural Establishment principle, and marks his appreciation of honesty and his sense of its importance in all under his care, by giving to the honest servant tokens of his favour and regard, which he not only does not

feel himself justified in extending to the dishonest one, but which, on the contrary, the servant's dishonesty positively prevents him, as a lover of truth and righteousness, from doing. His withholding, in such a case, from the dishonest servant what he bestowed upon the honest one would be an act of justice, and not of injustice. Is it otherwise, we ask, with the magistrate, as regards the true or a false religion? By countenancing and supporting the true religion, in opposition to the false, as we have shown that the State is bound to do, it does not create the distinction between the one and the other, or place them on an inequality; but finding from the Word of God that there is a marked and imperishable distinction between them, which gives the true religion a *paramount claim* on the attention and regard of all, the State, by taking it into its favour, and giving it the countenance and support which its divine character and vital importance demand, only acknowledges its claims, and pays becoming tribute to its divine Author. Instead of his doing this being an act of political wrong, to do otherwise—whether in the way of ignoring both, or taking both into his favour—were a sin and a crime, an act of disloyalty towards Him by whom kings reign, and a surrendering of the nation to lawlessness and irreligion.

The position taken up by the authors of the

manifesto in regard to political rights is just that of Mr Marshall and the other advocates of Voluntaryism during the time of the controversy, from which they were so completely driven by the advocates of the Establishment principle at that time. And we cannot do better than produce the following triumphant answer, by the late Dr Andrew Thomson :—

“Mr Marshall argues,” he says, “that to charter and endow any particular profession of religion ‘is at variance with justice—creates a distinction among the members of the community which no legislature has a right to create.’ Now we maintain that it would be most unjust, and altogether impolitic, not to make a distinction. And we *do* ‘presume to say’ that we maintain most resolutely that there *is* ‘either well-doing or evil-doing, *politically speaking*, in adopting or not adopting a religious creed.’ And we assert that such a circumstance does not merely ‘make a difference in the eye of the Church and in the eye of God, but that it makes, or ought to make, the mightiest difference in the eye of the State.’ And Mr Fuller has proved most triumphantly that the Calvinistic system is eminently fitted to promote public morals, while the Socinian system has a powerfully demoralising tendency. Will Mr Marshall ‘presume to say’ that this circumstance should make no difference in the eye of the State? and that the Government ought to give no greater countenance to the professors of the one creed than to those of the other?”\*

It is not possible to put truth on an equality with error; the very entertaining of such an idea is derogatory to the truth—it is to give encouragement to error at the expense of truth. If an *individual*

\* “Christian Instructor,” 1830, p. 718.

ought to give *the truth*, when proposed to him, the paramount control it claims over him and all he has, and ought on no consideration to treat the truth of God and the lie of Satan as if both had like claims on his support, or as if he had nothing more to do with truth than with error ; a like duty devolves upon a *nation* which is favoured with the truth. The authors of the Manifesto will probably admit with Mr Marshall that the legislature of a country has a right "to tax the inhabitants of all classes and descriptions for whatsoever object it decrees conducive to the common advantage," though with him they hold that, "properly speaking, religion is none of the concerns of Government."

"In direct opposition to this," said Dr Thomson, "we maintain that religion, being not only of greater advantage to society, but the very bond by which society is held together, must, in its general principles at least, form an important object of earnest attention to nations and their rulers. . . . A pure profession of Christianity is 'deemed' by the legislature 'an object conducive to the common advantage,' and therefore they support it from the common fund. Nor is the plea of conscience, to which Mr Marshall refers, sufficient to invalidate the application of these principles to religion any more than to other objects of civil government. Mr Marshall asks, 'What if we are taxed to support a religion from which we conscientiously dissent? Do you call this justice? Does it never occur to you that it is a matter in which our conscience may be concerned as well as our property?' Mr Marshall's great error lies in thinking that *religion* is the only thing about which conscience

is concerned, and in thinking that the nation has not a right to devote the public funds to an object, because certain individuals, or certain classes of the community, may, from *conscience*, oppose that object.”\*

The conscience is affected by other things besides religion, so that if the plea is admitted, “that no tax can be rightly imposed against which individuals or even classes of the community may have conscientious scruples, you sweep away at once the entire system of taxation.”

It is not the countenance and support which the nation gives to the true religion and the Church of Christ that gives rise to political inequality, but the prevalence of a spirit of irreligion and ungodliness. The nation can no more occupy a position of neutrality toward religion than can the individual. If it is not for Christ, it will be against Him. And hence this dream of religious equality is just another name for the triumph of the false religion, under whose oppressive sway Voluntaries might find, when too late, that in agitating for a divorce between the nation and the true religion, in the hope of thereby securing political equity, they had brought themselves and the nation under an intolerable despotism. The doctrines and institutions which are divinely revealed are not only true and good in a theological sense, but they are also *politically* good and profitable to men. And it is

\* “Christian Instructor,” 1830, pp. 718, 720.

only as they are recognised and fostered by the nation as they ought to be, that true political equity will ever be realised. "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. ii. 10-12). "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (Prov. viii. 15, 16).

### XIII.

#### UNCOMPROMISING ATTACK.

WE have gone over the different sections of the Manifesto, and have found that it embodies principles which are utterly subversive of all true civil and religious liberty. The authors talk of liberty of conscience, which, as contended for by them, is nothing short of revolution and lawlessness. Their voice is the voice of Jacob, but their hands are the hands of Esau. None but the blind and besotted will be deceived by them; but then the multitude in our day are so blinded by prejudice, and besotted by ignorance and indifference, that they are taken with the cry *liberty of conscience and equality*, and will scarcely pause to listen to the words of truth and soberness. Voluntaryism is the great idol of the present day which has gathered round it a motley group of worshippers prepared to consecrate themselves to its service—influenced, indeed, by diverse motives, but all bent upon the great work of destruction, which is the acceptable offering to this Siva of Christian Voluntaries.

The United Presbyterian Church, as the representative of so-called Christian Voluntaryism, leads

the van, crying, Down with existing Establishments, as the practical development of a system which is unscriptural!—The Secularists, as the representatives of modern infidelity, fall in with the cry, Down with existing Establishments, as opposed to liberty of thought and the free spirit of the age!—Then come Liberal politicians, as the representatives of the mob, who join in the cry, Down with existing Establishments, as a sop to Cerberus, or a needful concession to the power of democracy, and as essential to the triumph of the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity which have done so much for unhappy France!—Then follow the Papists, as the representatives of spiritual despotism, and they cry, Down with existing Establishments, as standing in the way of the nation's subjection to their ghostly sway!—And the rear is brought up by the Free *Protesting* Church of Scotland, as the representatives of Establishments in the *abstract*, and the Gibeonites of Christian Voluntaries, or the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the United Presbyterians, and they cry, Down with existing Establishments, because deformed with many *abuses* and inconsistent with the triumph of the principle which puts uncontrolled power in the hands of ecclesiastical leaders! The past history and avowed principles of the latter rather hamper them in their movement; and

therefore they have contented themselves very much with calling the Establishment bad names, as the most effectual way, in their estimation, of getting their designs against her accomplished; and we would suggest to them, before they plunge deeper into the mire, that they should take a survey of their position and their "*company*," and, in doing this, to remember the cruise of the *Antelope*, and the reply of Dr Cook, in his discussion with Dr Ritchie. "Dr Ritchie tells us," he says, "he did not ask the captain, 'Have you any infidels on board?' but he examined the soundness of the vessel, the skill of the captain, and the seamanship of the crew. Yes, the *vessel*, the *captain*, and the *crew* are, indeed, the proper concerns of a passenger. But—neither to speak of vessel nor captain—who are the crew with whom my rev. friend has chosen to navigate? It is the Popish and infidel *crew* that finally threaten the peace and the safety of the ship! For a while, no doubt, the monstrous coalition may get on together, just as long as a sense of common danger keeps them subordinate to their common rules—just as long as objects of *piracy* present for common plunder. But wait—and you will not have to wait long—for the mutiny of the *crew*, and then comes the fell struggle for ascendancy, which Popery and infidelity are yet doomed to hold" (p. 28). Is this what Free

Churchmen are prepared to contemplate as the fearful consummation of their unholy alliance against Establishments? Is the historian of "The Ten Years' Conflict" for the Church's spiritual independence in connection with the State, to live to put the copestone on the temple of spiritual despotism? We hope not. But if he and those who co-operate with him in this present movement are not prepared to face such an issue of the conflict, they would do well to pause, and remember that evil communications corrupt good manners, and that the beginnings of evil are like the letting out of water.

Christian Voluntaries have set their hearts upon the overthrow of the existing Establishments in England and Scotland, and to the accomplishment of this object they have resolved to devote their energies with unswerving diligence. No reform, however great; no rectifying of abuses, however thorough and scriptural; can be entertained by them. Instead of diverting them from what they regard as their divine mission as Voluntaries, the very fact of such things being proposed would seem to have roused them, *as of old*, to determined action. They are shrewd enough to see that the abolition of patronage and the renovation of the Establishment in Scotland would be a deathblow to them; and therefore these modern Demetriuses,

with the craftsmen of like occupation belonging to other churches, are raising the cry in behalf of Voluntaryism—a deity which owes its origin, according to one who is now a devout worshipper at its shrine, to the “old enemy” of the kingdom of Christ. “It is now more than time,” say the authors of the Manifesto, “to meet all such proposals (of reformation) with the simple demand, ‘Disestablishment, Disendowment.’ *Then only shall we complete the work of reformation.*” It is certainly a new and extraordinary way of completing a work, *wholly to overthrow it!* And in proposing to furnish an illustration of this, it will require the skilful exercise of the power of conjuring which seems to be claimed by disestablished Churches in our day. This is what Christian Voluntaries gravely declare to be the work that lies to their hand to do—to complete the work of reformation by undoing all that the Reformers and the Reformation did in the way of bringing about, through God’s blessing, a harmonious and scriptural union between the Church and the nation, and “to mould the institutions of the State in conformity with the principles of justice and liberty!” Justice and liberty! Say rather, tyranny and bondage!

What they demand is a divorce between the nation and the Church, because they consider such a relation to be in itself sinful and prejudicial to

the interests of truth. This is the motive which prompts them to action. The alliance is essentially wrong in itself, according to them: and "citizens," they tell us, "have the right in equity to demand . . . that all civil Establishments of religion or *exercise of civil authority in matters of religion*, and all appropriations of the public resources to ecclesiastical and sectarian purposes, shall cease and determine." Nothing short of this will satisfy them. They have no special complaint against the existing Establishments which does not, in their opinion, apply with equal force to the State Church system or Establishment principle. And hence this cry for the disestablishment and disendowment of existing Establishments *now*, is the same that was heard during the Voluntary controversy. We find one of the speakers at a meeting in defence of Church Establishments, held at Arbroath in 1834, saying, "Their motto is ruin, mine is reform: theirs is the Edomite cry, Raze it; mine is, Repair it. They have taken us, sir, at a disadvantage—they knew that we were repairing the breaches which patronage had made in our walls; for never did they cry raze it, till we cried reform it. They flattered themselves, perhaps, that when our hands were already engaged in repairing our Jerusalem, we should fall an easy prey to their attack; but they shall find, sir, that we can do, as

the Israelites were ready to do of old, while we build up the breach with the one hand, we can smite down the enemy with the other." Without alluding further to this quotation, it is somewhat striking that this new raid against Establishments should have originated in connection with an attempt on the part of the Establishment in this country to get rid of the yoke of patronage. The connection between the two, in so far as the Free Church is concerned, is painfully and pitifully close. It is not for us to pronounce upon the motives that may be influencing the leaders in the Free Church, after thirty years' silence—and at a time when, themselves being judges, the Establishment is, to say the least, far from being worse than it was—to join in the Edomite cry, raze it, instead of seeking its reform; or seeking, in accordance with their own protest, that our rulers may be brought to discharge aright the duty which they owe to the true religion and the Church of Christ. But whatever may be their motives, they are entering on a career which is to falsify their whole history, to stigmatise the memory of the illustrious dead, to give a practical denial to their own solemn declaration that they hold by the principles of the Reformed Church of Scotland, to expose themselves to suspicion and dishonour among their allies, to make themselves a laughing-

stock in the community, and to do irreparable damage to the cause of truth.

The time has now come, according to the authors of the Manifesto, when Voluntaries are called upon to address themselves hopefully and uncompromisingly to the work of securing a practical exemplification of their Voluntarism in this covenanted land. The triumph of Voluntarism in the overthrow of Establishments is what United Presbyterians propose to themselves as the object of their present agitation. And while we hear some in the United Presbyterian Church—little to their credit—for union purposes and to secure the co-operation of others in their work of disestablishment, endeavouring to keep their principles in the background, we are indebted to the authors of the Manifesto for the clear and honest way in which they have expressed themselves, so that we are left in no doubt as to what it is we must contemplate as the issue of the present disestablishment movement, should it be crowned with success. This is worth something. “A prudent man,” says the proverb, “foreseeth the evil and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished.” And the punishment in this case will be disastrous in the extreme.

“In order,” says Dr M’Crie, “to form a proper estimate of the nature, tendency, and pernicious effects of this scheme

(Voluntaryism), we must suppose men to be impelled by its principles to action in civil society ; we must suppose rulers or subjects, either apart or in conjunction, making the attempt to change, or actually changing, the frame of their Government, and the system of their laws, so as to conform to these principles. What would be the consequence? Every constitution in Christendom must be taken to pieces and altered, in as far as any particular religion (the best reformed not excepted) obtains a legal preference and support ; . . . settled provision for maintaining religious institutions, or any mode of Christian instruction by law, would be withdrawn ; . . . the social compact, in so far as religion is comprehended in it, with coronation oaths . . . must be swept away as rubbish. The great charter securing universal liberty, or licence of conscience, would come instead of them all . . . However much such a scheme of Government and reformation may be now cried up as sound policy, essential to the liberties of mankind, and necessary to secure the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, for our part we do not see how it can be freed from impiety and rebellion against the Lord and His Anointed. . . . It would be an irreligious, an ungodly, an unchristian reformation." \*

That this is no fancy picture on the part of Dr M'Crie is manifested from the demands put forth in the present day by "the Liberal League," or Voluntaries of America—a nation which used to be pointed to as a fine example of the beneficial working of Voluntaryism. These demands are nine in number, and among them we find the following :—"4. We demand . . . *especially* that the use of the Bible in public schools, whether ostensibly as a text book, or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall cease. 6. We demand

\* "Statement," &c., pp. 24, 25, 28.

that judicial oaths in the courts and in other departments of Government shall be abolished. 7. We demand that all laws directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed. 8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of 'Christian' morality shall be abrogated; and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of national morality, equal rights, and impartial liberty. 9. We demand that not only in the constitutions of the United States and of its several States, but also in the practical administration of the same, no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity, or any other special religion; that our entire political system shall be founded and administered on a purely secular basis." These demands, so appalling and abhorrent to every Christian mind, afford a practical illustration of the principles embodied in this Manifesto of the United Presbyterian Church, and which they seek to have carried into practical operation in this disestablishment movement. But while the publication of these demands has created a reaction in the minds of American Christians, and is leading them to fall back upon the principles of our Scottish Reformation as the only safety for their nation, the publication of the United Presbyterian Manifesto in this country seems to be the standard

around which recreant Scotsmen, given up to strong delusion, are to muster and wage war against our Protestant constitution and all our civil rights and liberties, at the cry, "Disestablishment, disendowment."

Surely no sane man who believes in the principles of our constitution would, because of some wrongs existing in it or its administration, set himself to seek the entire overthrow of civil government, and not the needed reformation. In like manner, no sane man who holds by the Establishment principle will lend himself, because of abuses and evils in existing Establishments, to help in bringing about the abolition of all national recognition of the truth, instead of endeavouring the reformation of the evils complained of. "The evils," says the present Dr M'Crie in the "Vindication," published in 1834, p.17—"the evils which attach to the Churches established by law in this country furnish no reason why Seceders should condemn the principle of Establishments, or wage war *against their existence*. They satisfied themselves for a long time with bearing a public testimony against their abuses, and maintaining ecclesiastical fellowship among themselves under the banner of that testimony. If they thought that more was required of them in the present times, the way was open to

them as citizens, if not in their ecclesiastical capacity, to petition the Legislature for the repeal of the patronage law, the abjuration oath, and other acts of the State which oppose barriers to the work of reformation and to a reunion among its friends. Such a course would have been becoming their professions; it might have secured the co-operation of other Presbyterians within and without the Establishment; and, whether successful or not in their efforts, they might have consoled themselves with the reflection that they had improved the opportunity denied to their fathers of addressing a Parliament more disposed than formerly to listen to the public voice, and of seeking the redress of grievances and the correction of abuses deeply affecting the interests of religion and the peace of the country; but instead of this they have embarked in a scheme which, if it should succeed, would bury the grand object aimed at by the Secession in the same grave with the corruptions of the Establishment." This may well be taken as a seasonable word of counsel and warning by some who have embarked in the Voluntary crusade.

It is always easier to *pull down* than to *construct*. Brute force can overthrow what it took the genius of ages to rear up. It is easy to incite an ignorant and phrensied multitude to overturn existing

institutions, under the conviction that there is something bad about them. They go at such work with a purpose; but when they once begin their work of demolition, they are not careful to discriminate between the good and the bad, and they usually do not cease till they have involved all in a common ruin. However such employment may suit the taste and inclination of the demagogue, it is surely the part of all who profess to be the guides of public opinion and to consult the highest good of the nation, to exert their influence in seeking to conserve whatever is good, and to rectify whatever is wrong in existing institutions, that they may the more efficiently promote the great ends for which they were set up. And even in the case where it might be alleged that the institution was so corrupt as to be incapable of reform, it would be the part of a wise man, when contemplating its removal, to bethink him how its place could be more beneficially supplied.

There is a restlessness and desire for change pervading the minds of men in the present day, which discover themselves in their impatience of all restraint and their proposals to alter or abolish all old and well-established principles and practices, that they may have free scope for the development of those which in their judgment are better

adapted to the progressive tendency of the age. They are for removing all the safeguards for our civil and religious liberties—the fruit of the wisdom, prayers, and blood of our reforming forefathers, as unsuited to the *liberal* and *enlightened spirit* of their degenerate sons! They would have us lift the anchor by which we have been moored to God and His truth for upwards of 300 years (during which we have attained to such signal greatness), and go to sea with men who have no definite beliefs of any kind—whose watchword is *progress*, and whose landing-place is *anarchy* and *destruction*. And it is surely the duty of every one who loves the truth and his country, in times such as these, when applying himself to deal with the relation which now subsists between the nation and religion and the Church of Christ, to beware, in his professed desire to remedy existing evils, that he does not give countenance and encouragement to principles and practices which will afford full and uncontrolled play to those elements which will sweep away everything like a national recognition of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and hand us over to the tender mercies of the Man of Sin. Disestablishment and disendowment may be a becoming cry in the mouth of Voluntaries, infidels, and Papists, whose aim is the nation's divorce from the true Church of Christ; but it cannot point to the

true solution of existing evils, in the judgment of those who hold that it is the duty of the nation and its rulers to favour the true religion and the Church of Christ, and that "the nation and kingdom which will not serve her shall perish."

In so far as those outside existing Establishments are concerned, it is with the rightful discharge, on the part of the nation, of its duty toward the Church, that they have to do. And its sin in casting off and disowning the Church of Christ and the Word of God will be no less certain to draw down judgments upon it, than its sin in intruding itself into the Church's peculiar province. It is therefore a strange and unaccountable thing for men to urge on the nation to reject Christ, as the best way of repairing the dishonour it has done to Christ—to atone for one sin by the commission of another!

No; it is not by such Voluntary expedients that the cause of truth and righteousness is to be advanced in our land. It is our duty, in these times, when the Lord is shaking the nations, if we would be instrumental in saving our land, to hold fast and hold forth the time-honoured and God-honouring principles of our Scottish Reformation. It is only as they triumph that our nation will continue to occupy the first place among the nations of Christendom; and present to the eyes of all king-

doms the spectacle of a nation truly honoured and blessed of God, because bringing its glory and honour into the kingdom of Christ. Surely it is not to be recorded in history that it was on the soil drenched by the blood of martyrs, who contended against such mighty odds for these Reformation principles, that they were basely surrendered and betrayed into the hands of the enemy, under the pretext of thereby maintaining the honour of Christ, and advancing the cause of civil and religious liberty! Surely it is not to be recorded in history that the vision of a nation and its ruler serving the Lord Christ, which floated before the minds of our noble and godly ancestors, and for the realisation of which they prayed and laboured so earnestly, was discovered by the light of this nineteenth century to have been a fond delusion which had no foundation in the Word of God, and that the work of reformation was only completed when, in accordance with the principles of Voluntaryism, every trace of the true religion had been erased from the statute-book of the realm! This would be to blot out our nation from among the nations of Christendom, and “to expose ourselves,” as Dr M’Crie says, “to the merited reprobation addressed by God to His ancient people—‘ Pass over the isles of Chittim and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing:

hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.'” He then adds words which it were well for our modern reformers (!) seriously to ponder :—

“Bad as we are, it is hoped that we are not yet prepared for the adoption of this system, and that there are still a number, who, although they may have unwarily admitted some of its leading principles, may be persuaded to pause, reconsider, and contemplate the inevitable consequence to which it leads. Persons, by fixing their attention immovably upon evils and abuses which attach to, or result from, the Establishments with which they are acquainted, are in danger of overlooking the more general and extensive good which they are calculated to produce, or may be rendered subservient unto ; and, instead of seeking the correction of abuses and the redress of grievances, they are ready to look forward with big expectations to a total revolution in such matters, without taking into view, or being aware of, the infinitely greater evils which would arise from the new mode of things.\*”

We cannot do better, in drawing these articles to a close, than adopt the following sentence from the manifesto (almost the only one with which we agree) :—“We may expect in this, as in every moral struggle, to see victory crown at last the arms of truth and justice rather than those of policy or numbers, and minorities animated by definite principle influence events more powerfully than larger bodies governed by elastic maxims.” This testimony is true ; and committing the cause we have been advocating to the care of Him with

\* “Statement,” p. 29.

whose honour and glory it is so inseparably connected, we can look forward with confidence to the time when Voluntaryism shall cease and determine, and the cry shall be heard : “ The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT  
OF THE  
ESTABLISHED CHURCHES OF ENGLAND  
AND SCOTLAND.

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THE following is an account of the Appointment of the United Presbyterian Committee on Disestablishment and Disendowment:—

It was on the 21st day of May 1872, that the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church agreed to appoint the Committee under whose authority the Statement, on which we have been commenting, was issued, and we herewith append the terms of the appointment and the names of the members of said Committee:—"The Synod adopt the overture of the Presbytery of Dunfermline, and agree to petition Parliament in terms thereof; also agree, that a Committee be appointed on the disestablishment of the English and Scottish Churches, to watch over the attempts of the friends of State Churches of the kingdom to prop up the existing system, said Committee to adopt all suitable means to secure the end contemplated in the overture"—viz, the disestablishment and disendowment of the above-named Churches. The following are the members of Com-

mittee :—Drs Johnston, Cairns, Peddie, and Joseph Brown. Messrs Renton, Hutton, Kinnear, Alex. Oliver, J. D. Fleming, and J. Davidson, Selkirk, ministers ; and Messrs J. D. Peddie, A. Mitchell, Dalkeith ; G. Pearson, Glasgow ; J. Hunter, Innellan ; and J. K. Crawford, Edinburgh, elders.

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STATEMENT, BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE SYNOD OF THE  
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OF THE GROUNDS  
WHICH JUSTIFY AND DEMAND PROSECUTION OF THIS  
OBJECT.\*

#### I.—POSITION OF THE STATE CHURCH SYSTEM.

THE question of the continuance or discontinuance of the State Church system is rapidly coming to the foreground. Disestablishment and Disendowment are watchwords of an increasing party in the State. The Irish Church has been disestablished, and motions, precursors of others, have already been submitted to Parliament, with powerful exposition of principles, by the Nonconformist leader, calling for similar legislation in reference to the remaining Church Establishments of England and Scotland. Both in the ecclesiastical and political world the abolition of civil Establishments of religion *is known to be only a question of time*, and it may become sooner than many expect the question of the day. Involving deeply the interests of religion, the subject demands the most serious attention of the religious community, and eminently of members of the United Presbyterian Church, if they would prove them-

\* The *italics* in the body of this document are not in the original.

selves "men having understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."

In accordance with *the well-known position of the denomination*, the Synod has uniformly, as occasion required, declared its disapproval of the State Church system. Of late years it has repeatedly taken action, and passed resolutions in this sense, bearing on various branches of the question, and has laid its testimony before our rulers. In particular, at its last meeting, upon overture by one of its Presbyteries, the Synod adopted a petition to Parliament, in which it declared, "that in its judgment the time had arrived when, in the interests of sound policy, as well as of justice and religion itself, State Establishments and Endowments for the teaching of religion ought to cease and determine in England and Scotland, as well as by recent legislation they had come to an end in Ireland;" and praying for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of these Churches. The Synod further appointed a committee "to watch over the attempts of the friends of State Churches to prop up the existing system, and to adopt all suitable means to secure the end contemplated by the overture." *Other bodies*, influenced by events, have adopted measures in the same direction.

A movement like the present must plainly seek its *basis in sound principles*, as well as its inspiration in the highest motives; and it is of primary moment that *these principles be prominently exhibited*, and that there go forth from their advocates in the coming conflict *no uncertain sound*.

The United Presbyterian Church has been *conspicuously identified* with the assertion and illustration of *the principles of Christian Voluntaryism*, and upon *these alone* it can go forward honourably and hopefully to the new battles of religious freedom. Never were distinct utterance and firm attitude more indispensable. Co-operation

among the several forces now menacing the State Church system itself depends on the unfaltering counsels of those who lead the van. We may expect in this, as in every moral struggle, to see victory crown at last the arms of truth and justice rather than those of policy or numbers; and minorities animated by definite principle, influence events more powerfully than larger bodies governed by elastic maxims. While, therefore, United Presbyterians will know how to avail themselves of all common ground proper to citizens, they owe it to the cause of truth, identified with their history, to hold forth as well as to hold fast a distinctive testimony against civil Establishments of religion, *as radically injurious to the interests of religion, opposed to the genius of its institutions, and fraught with political and social injustice.*

It is a source of advantage that the verdict against the system may be equally reached by *a due study either of the civil constitution*, or of the special requirements and laws of the ecclesiastical. The latter has been the process by which members of our Churches; aided by the results of experience, have chiefly been led to their conclusions. They have become satisfied, from the nature of religion and Christianity, that civil Government ought not to interfere in their regulation or temporal maintenance. From the nature of common citizenship, it has also been shown that *civil legislation ought not to extend beyond the outward and secular affairs of communities.* Holding the divine authority of the Scriptures, we are prepared to find the dictates of enlightened reason in harmony with their teachings, and to admit its decisions.

"To the law and to the testimony," the only infallible rule of faith and practice, we first confidently appeal. *Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New has the State Church system the slightest countenance.*

## II.—FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM.

The State Church system has assumed various forms, but the radical feature of statutory enactment, patronage, or control of religion pervades them all. Its most recent advocate fairly enough describes its elements: "the first is, that the State should recognise and support some religious expression of the community; the second, that this religious expression should be controlled and guided by the State. These two elements are inseparable, and must be attacked and defended together." This principle, carried through, extends to any expression—Pagan, Moslem, or Christian—although its author appears to confine it to Christian forms. Of these, however, all possible varieties are included as competent. And the description applies to all leading forms and theories of the system,—to the union of the temporal and spiritual jurisdictions in the Royal prerogative, or to their legislative distribution; to the toleration of non-established bodies, or their suppression by law; to the establishment of orthodoxy or of heterodoxy; to the levelling up by indiscriminate endowments of miscellaneous religionists, or the pensioning of favoured sects; to the paying of sums for the support of truth as an occasional duty, or as a permanent obligation. It applies to all forms of civil endowment, and of the exercise of lay or Government patronage; to all regulating of the Establishment, whether by the Legislature, the Executive, or Courts of Law.

As we view the system historically, we find Paganism, Mohammedanism, Popery, Prelacy, and Presbytery, establishing, as exclusively legal, their respective types of religious organisation, until the growth of some form of dissent has led to a side patronage, or defined toleration of other sects. The history of the British Empire itself affords

illustration of this varied result. As now existing in England and Scotland, and but yesterday in Ireland, the features of the system fully appear. Created by legislation, one of the State Churches of the United Kingdom has just been abolished by Act of Parliament, while the others stand on the sole foundation of the Statutes.

In England, the articles of faith, the terms of the liturgy, the exercise of patronage, the properties and revenues of the ecclesiastical corporations, the jurisdiction of the Courts and of Parliament, the headship of the Sovereign, the ecclesiastical ceremonies and ornaments, are fixed by the Statutes. The Acts of Supremacy and of Uniformity are the basis of the English Church.

On the Acts of the Reformed Parliament of Scotland, the Revolution Settlement, the Treaty of Union, and other Acts, rests the structure of the Scottish Establishment. In the Act 1649, ratifying the Confession and Catechism, the Estates of Parliament "ordain them to be recorded, published, and practised." By the Act of Anne, 1711, the yoke of patronage was firmly reimposed.

In the Confession of Faith itself, which is the legalised creed of that Church, it is declared that "the magistrate hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruption and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." These words are inconsistent with the statement elsewhere, that "God alone is Lord of the conscience;" but as no chain is stronger than its weakest link, the latter

far-reaching doctrine is qualified and neutralised by the former.

It is not less true of the Scotch than of the English Establishment that in point of history the Courts of law and legislation have taken order affecting both its temporalities and the decisions of its judicatories, that patronage reigns in the appointment of its ministers, and that Royalty assumes to convoke and dismiss its Assemblies.

### III.—THE SYSTEM IS UNSCRIPTURAL.

1. *Tested by the general principles of Scripture regarding the nature of Religion and the Church, the system is condemned.*

(1.) *It invades the divine prerogative.*

Nothing is more plainly taught throughout Scripture, than that *the obligations of religion lie exclusively between man and God*, who claims an undivided and sovereign control over its institutions and acts. Erroneous conceptions on this point lie at the root of the State Church system. It is forgotten that religion can be furthered only in accordance with its own special laws, and that these regulate both its outward form and inward life. Its temporal support has in particular been regarded as something outside of itself, that may be equally or better made a civil arrangement, instead of being part and parcel of its own divine polity. But religion consists solely in those services and exercises, public, private, and secret, which reverence for the divine character and law alone can inspire, and it has its appropriate divine institutions and methods, which admit neither of being supplemented nor improved.

All religion is voluntary, the free act of the individual dealing with God; and *collective exercises are genuine only*

*when the individuals uniting in them render to God their personal offerings and services.*

Governments and Parliaments do not offer to God their personal property when they vote grants or impose taxes for religion. Neither do they express any faith but their own—if they necessarily express that—by the act of adopting Confessions. In neither case can their deed be held the deed of the future or unborn citizen, or, in the eye of Him who will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, of any who are indifferent to the act, or dissent from it. And there is no religion by proxy. To attempt it is to follow a false analogy from civil transactions. *National endowments and legal creeds*, fixed by statute centuries since, however they might express the piety of their authors, express nothing of the subsequent forms and fluctuations of religious life, and *are valueless as continued testimonies or gifts*, wanting the vital element of voluntary adhesion or renovation which the free life of the Church secures.

Authority in matters of religion includes authority both over the worshipper and the worshipping society, over conscience and over the Church, the whole individual and collective religious life, and is competent only to the Author of the soul, who can have no Vicar either in Church or State. As God cannot deny Himself, He cannot confer on magistracy or society a power of interference between Him and His worshippers. The powers of society are therefore limited by the rights of God and of the individual, as first a subject of God and then of the State; and it is the first duty owed to God by rulers to leave the religious life, individual and collective, a free course, and its entire sphere inviolate to the Divine Sovereign.

But the State Church system invades the divine province. It thrusts human government into the place of the

divine, and requires the subject, however orderly, to account at law for his religious opinions or practices. It fixes either the creed he shall profess, or the worship to which he shall conform, or the Church he shall support, or the observances which he may legally practise. When it does not presume to forbid, it presumes to authorise obedience to the divine law, and enacts that which admits of being enacted only by the Divine King, enforcing by the sword-power those gifts and services which He himself refrains from enforcing except by moral means.

Its toleration of dissent, extorted not without martyr blood and hard political struggles, is only an abatement of the grosser forms of its assumption and tyranny, and no concession of principle.

Even when best intentioned, and not, as it has been often seen, coarsely adopted as an engine of government, this attempt to rule men in matters of religion, to shape by civil power the faith, worship, and offerings of a people, is a profane meddling with things of the kingdom not of this world. "There are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland," said Andrew Melville to his sovereign: "there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member." Yet this worst of usurpations, that of Christ's undelegated rights in matters of faith and worship, has been strangely regarded as homage to the Heavenly King.

(2.) *It violates the rights of conscience.*

These are the rights of men as religious beings. The rights of the Lord of the conscience, and those of the subjects of His authority, are necessarily invaded together. *Society was made for man, and not man for society*, and the right to obey God precedes the obligation to obey man.

Peter and James, when receiving dictation on the great religious question of their day, asserted the right to judge for themselves what was agreeable to the will of God. But *private judgment* means more than right to think—that cannot be wrested away by legislation ; *it means also the right to give effect to conviction, subject to the Lord of the conscience, and the just order of society.* It includes the liberty of worship, and of acting by persuasion on other minds, the whole liberty required for the free exercise of religious life, whether in its individual or associated acts. Such rights being primary, may not be sacrificed to the caprices or artificial necessities of Government, which ought to limit itself strictly to the restraint only of those departures from order in the name of religion, that trespass on *the equal rights of all.* *Respect to these lies at the foundation of national liberty and well-being.*

But they have been uniformly disregarded and violated in the working of the State Church system, which neither in Popish nor Protestant times has ever yielded spontaneously an atom of privilege. To secure religious conformity, or exact tribute, *the mildest expedients have been fine and imprisonment, while in less scrupulous times the stake and the scaffold were freely employed.* Not Popery only, or Prelacy, but Presbytery has practised intolerance and coercion in its interests. The old policy, which made refusal to worship the golden image a political offence, and sacrificed the Lord of the conscience to its fears and jealousies, has constituted the simplest form of dissent an iniquity to be punished by the judge, as the history, not yet remote, of tithes, Church-rates, and Annuity-tax bears witness. It has been attempted to slight such questions as these last, as only questions of money, as if no sacred feelings and rights were affected by taxation. But *there is plainly no difference in principle between compelling a citizen to part with*

*his money, and compelling him to part with his time or labour, for alleged sacred purposes.* The freedom implied in the rights of conscience applies to the whole field of private judgment, and of the action which it dictates, and includes the right of the citizen to act for himself in all matters of religion, not excepting the disposal of his means for its support, the duty of rendering property to God. It is a right for which he may earnestly contend, that he be left free from any commandments of men, to employ his resources, time or labour, for the promotion of such religious objects only as conscience approves. To exact by legal process his labour, time, or property, in order to furnish the means of religious endowments and grants, is legalised robbery ; and to constitute his refusal to render them a legal offence, is an act of civil wrong and contempt ; while the method of mixing up the charges of the State Church with the ordinary civil charges, seems *only ill-disguised compulsion, and circuitous theft for religious purposes.*

But this is the system under which the inhabitants of this country are placed. Dissenting subjects are still liable for the support of the Churches, the clergy, and the religious stipendiaries of Government. While the older forms of persecution and disability have ceased with a former age, State Churchism remains true, as far as it dares, to what lies at the root of all—*compulsory principles in religion.*

2. *It is opposed to the special rules and examples of Scripture.*

*It is contrary to Old Testament institutions.*

In these we look in vain for the features of civil enactment, support, or control of religion, except in the impieties and indiscretions of kings or rulers assuming to be a law to themselves.

*Primitive and patriarchal times yield no trace of it.* Abraham voluntarily presenting tithes to Melchisedec of the spoils of war, is vainly likened to a modern heritor, and the priest-king of Salem to a parochial incumbent. Heathen monarchs proclaiming fasts, and decreeing religion under penalties, are not approved for their threats or injunctions as models of zeal with knowledge, but they and their people are accepted on their personal repentance by Him who is rich in mercy.

*The Jewish Church was a polity unique and alone, a pure theocracy or Church-state in which God was all.* So far from being a civil establishment of religion, it was wholly a divine establishment of religion and civil life, set up by infallible Deity, who guided its administrators by supernatural rules and counsel. Jehovah was at once God and King, political and spiritual Head; and human kings, when employed, were but royal vassals of the theocratic Sovereign. Its Divine Ruler was careful then, as now, to make it known that He alone was Lord of the conscience. "Thus saith the Lord," "This is the thing that the Lord commanded," was the preface of Moses and David to all regulations. But we have no such feature in our State Churches. God spake by Moses and David and others, but we look in vain for proof that He spake by Constantine, Henry VIII., or William of Orange. *We know that Hezekiah, Josiah, and other kings, had prophets at their ear;* but this will not be alleged of the Jameses, Charleses, Marys, the Tudors, Stuarts, or their successors, or of the Parliaments that passed the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, or even that ratified the Confessions and Catechisms. Men, in whatever station, are now referred for rules and principles to a completed Scripture, without power to enforce on others the interpretation they may adopt. *It was certainly not enjoined by God that the Confession of Faith, or the Thirty-Nine Articles, should be made*

*the law of the land ; or that Henry VIII. should constitute himself head of the Church in England in room of the Pope ; or that James should establish Presbytery, or Charles II. swear the Solemn League and Covenant.* The deeds of these kings and Parliaments were of their own policy alone, inventions of men,—not ordinances of God. And they were unwarranted inventions ; for the divine law, and not the divine procedure, forms our rule of duty ; and that which is fitting in God does not therefore become His creatures. On the contrary, however pious it may superficially seem for rulers to enact religion, there is nothing more truly impious, because belonging solely to Himself. Jewish rulers had in no case a legislative but only a strictly defined ministerial power in religion, which itself passed away with Judaism, when Christ appeared as the end of the law.

In contrast with the system of appointment in State Churches, it is undoubted that *the appointment of the ministers of religion lay exclusively with God.*

In regard to the support of religion, the contrast was not less striking. The tabernacle in the wilderness was erected, not by the fruits of taxation, but by free-will offerings. The first and second temples were built on the same principle,—kings, like nursing-fathers, contributing willingly, as did the people, of their own proper good. The repairs of the fabrics were provided from sources strictly sacred and voluntary. The history of the synagogues points the same lesson. They were the fruit not of the taxing power of rulers, but of the cheerful liberality of men like the pious centurion.

The payment of tithes to the Levites shows a system of ministerial support bearing no resemblance to civil endowments or tithes, which are compulsory, purely of human origin, and without moral features. The Levitical tithes were expressly appointed by God, and, *while obligatory, were voluntary.* God's command was laid on the conscience,

and *neither priests nor rulers had power to collect them by legal pains*. Penalties were enforced for breaches of the judicial and ceremonial law, but only the penalties of providence attached to neglect of tithes and offerings. Besides, *the tithes were founded in equity* and wise adaptation to the system of which they were part. The Levites, *being destined to special duties, obtained no share in the division of the land*, except the cities and suburbs of their residences, and *the tithes were assigned them in lieu of this means of support*, and, along with the things of the altar, *as remuneration for their services in the sanctuary and commonwealth*. Derived from the soil of the great Proprietor, *they were His wages to His servants*, who were also the servants of all ; and as paid by the human tenants, represented at once *the dues they owed to God and to His servants who served them in spiritual things*. Thus were the claims of the latter impressed on all worshippers, and the ministers of religion themselves taught to labour with diligence for God and the people, and to look for support alone to the Divine King, and those who loved His altar.

The prophecies in which kings and rulers are represented as doing homage to Christ, are to be interpreted of a homage consistent in its matter and form with the interests and law of His kingdom. They plainly indicate not the exercise by rulers of authority in the Church, or civil exactions for its support, but the enrolment of kings and rulers in its active membership, the existence and administration of just laws, the prosperity and final triumphs of the Church under its own institutions, the weapons which are not carnal, but mighty through God.

*It is opposed to the teaching of the New Testament.*

*The law was a schoolmaster until Christ*. Then the Church received its new and advanced form of a kingdom, catholic and spiritual, instead of local, typical, and

national. The temporal nationality of Israel was dissolved, and the temple itself laid in ruins, and everything but moral principles and eternal lessons abolished. And *what do we find when the whole old growth has been cleared down to the roots, continued under the new economy? The principle of liberty of conscience and of free-will offerings.*

It is not, indeed, pretended that the New Testament Church had any features of resemblance to State Churches. The Lord Jesus left behind Him only a model of a self-governing, self-supporting religious society, guided by His Word, and animated by His Spirit, a "kingdom not of this world," yet divinely adapted to exist and work out its ends freely everywhere, *in harmony with the just arrangements and order of civil life.*

It has, however, been said, that there was no opportunity at the inauguration of Christianity for obtaining the support of earthly rulers. But Jesus came in "the fulness of the time," at the most fitting moment, when the theatre of the world was best prepared for the display of the true form of the Church. He who then came could have come equally at the time of Constantine, or at a time when rulers would have been ready to take His cause by the hand; or He could have inclined the hearts of kings to establish His Church by the civil arm; but He acted otherwise: His kingdom was to win, not force, its way in the world.

But we best know what Jesus meant by what He did and taught (John xviii. 36). He repudiated the sword. He chose to be supported during His ministry by the free-will offerings and services of His friends. In sending forth the seventy and the twelve, He instructed them to depend on similar aids. And "for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles;" refusing the carnal things of those who rejected their spiritual things.

In reply to false teachers, Paul vindicates *his right to "forbear working," and to be supported by the Churches ; while declining for special reasons support from Corinth, he accepted it from Philippi, and other quarters.* The right he shows to be founded in equity, acknowledged in Mosaic law, and permanently established by Christ. The soldier goes not to war at his own expense ; the husbandman eats of the fruit of the vineyard ; the shepherd of the milk of the flock. The ox is unmuzzled while treading the corn. The Levites lived of the temple ; the priests were partakers of the altar. The source of ministerial support is spiritual, the offerings of faith. It is not the promiscuous body of citizens on which the servant of the Church depends, but the Church itself, and primarily the flock or vineyard which he feeds or tends. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 1-14). "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. vi. 6).

In these apostolic expositions we have the supreme law of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is for all time ; and this is an ordinance for the support of its ministers in all time,—no more a preliminary arrangement of the new dispensation than the altar and the offerings were of the old, but permanent as the preaching of the word. This ordinance remains till it can be shown to be superseded by a new law of Christ. But it has been superseded by all State Churches, and glaringly by those of our own land, where ministers are required to live of the rates more than of the gospel, and to partake of the exchequer rather than of the altar, eating the fruit of all vineyards and the milk of all flocks but their own.

From all this it is evident that giving for the cause of Christ has been denied its rank as an ordinance of Christianity in State Churches. Praise and prayer are not more truly acts of religion than offerings of substance, and not more suitable to be performed or regulated by Act of Parliament. All are duties to be spontaneously practised, and all are privileges to be freely chosen.

Nothing has more degraded prevailing ideas and practices regarding the duty and privilege of giving than the State Church system, by which it has come to pass that *if money is got by any turning of the screw, by intricate construction of musty documents, or shameless knocking at the door of Parliament, the object is held as gained*; forgetting the rule of the house of Christ: "Every one as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

It is opposed to the teaching of the New Testament regarding the magistrate's power.

Magistracy is an ordinance of God, but it is also an "ordinance of man," and the submission required to it when set up, like that of the natural relations, is only "in the Lord;" and both civil authority and civil obedience have their limitations prescribed by the higher law.

Scruples existed among the Jews regarding allegiance to foreign rulers, as among early Christian converts regarding tribute to heathen kings; and our Lord solved honest fears as well as silenced crafty questions by His maxim, "Render to Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke xx. 25). The impression on the coin showed the Jews to be subject to Cæsar. Civil government is necessary to the protection of society, and taxation to the support of civil government. It is therefore lawful to render tribute. As the exiles in Babylon were enjoined to seek the peace of the kingdom, the Jews were now to pay tribute to Cæsar

in things not contrary to the law of God. Thus Jesus baffled His enemies by distinguishing the sphere in which Cæsar lawfully ruled—that of secular things—and the sphere which God reserves to Himself—all sacred things. In the spirit of his Master, Paul teaches that even heathen government had its claim as a crime-punishing and peace-protecting ordinance, and that as thus ministerial for the common good, it was to be supported and obeyed (Rom. xiii. 1-7). When it should enjoin or demand aught contrary to Heaven's law, the rule came instantly to apply, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Such passages, instead of favouring the loose notions of civil prerogative which the State Church system implies, rather shut the ruler within his proper domain.

#### IV.—THE SYSTEM IS INJURIOUS TO THE INTERESTS OF RELIGION.

Of this we might be assured from its unscripturalness. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The delicate plant of religion thrives under the nurture of Heaven, but withers in the mould of human artifice. It is confusedly thought that because civil order is promoted by the influence of religion, religion may therefore be employed as a State machinery. Even were it lawful to lay hold of such an instrument simply as a tool of State, its benefits are not thus secured. The ark of God, carried down into the battle, will not insure the victory. The institutions of religion yield their peaceable fruits only when scripturally administered. The abuse of the best things gives rise to the worst; and the perversion of divine ordinances by the State Church system has inflicted more injury on religion than the amount of Church life adhering to it has benefited law or order.

Religion ought to be felt as a sunshine, a fragrance, a sacred force in society. The State is society in its pro-

miscuous form, embracing all sects and classes, and ruling by physical sway, and is unfit to be the organ of the highest form of life. The Church is the divine organisation of Christianity. Unlike the State, to which men belong of necessity, the Church is a purely voluntary society, to which men attach themselves freely, and in which they voluntarily worship and labour under law to Christ teaching by His Word and Spirit, and enjoy the highest sense of order and liberty. It is thus the only form of society that can provide for the culture of religious willingness, and for perfect freedom from coercive influence in its acts.

In contrast with this divine method, the State Church system makes religion geographical, *without the power of affecting individual faith or practice*. It makes religion official instead of being first personal, as when a profligate must take the sacrament because he is a State functionary, or an atheist pay Church rates because he is a shopkeeper. It makes religion political, more a thing of the civil community than of the Church. It makes it conventional, a matter of custom and fashion, rather than of principle and conscience. It makes its collective deed that of promiscuous populations and Parliaments, instead of being the distinctive act of Christ's professing followers in their free capacity rendering personal homage; leading to compromise of religious truth, quickening error and deadening orthodoxy by converting them into statute.

Exerting a pressure foreign to the nature of religious impressions, which arise through persuasion of the truth alone, it awakens repugnance, contempt and fear, with the hypocrisies, evasions, resentments, and active hostility that follow; and engenders by the surest process the worst forms and manifestations of irreligion and infidelity.

Besides that it injuriously moulds by law ideas and habits which acquire their proper form only in the process of free growth, it debases and secularises ecclesiastical

life. It destroys the mutual dependence, sympathy, and obligations of the ministry and their flocks. It rears up a membership without self-reliance or intelligent interest in religion, indifferent to their spiritual rights, and a clergy more careful of civil status than of popular privilege. It builds up Churches, not, as has been said, for the poor, but really for the rich and fashionable, with relaxed discipline, repressed spiritual growth, slight demands on private liberality and enterprise; seats of servility to governments and obstruction to progress, with the other evils arising from the false authority, responsibility, and influence which it has imported into religion.

#### V.—THE SYSTEM IS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL EQUITY.

This last consideration appeals naturally to a large class of minds not influenced by other objections. Although secondary in its form, it is obviously of the utmost political weight, and none ought to be more earnest to give it due place than the friends of religion. It is not only true that, while religious institutions remain associated with the sense of social or political wrong, they cannot accomplish their beneficent ends; but justice has from its nature indefeasible claims, and is in truth a branch of practical Christianity. If injustice can be fairly charged, as it can, against the State Church system, it forms of itself an adequate reason for seeking its overthrow.

Now the rights of conscience are not those of a class or sect, but of men, and must be equally recognised in all persons. As nothing more nearly or powerfully affects personal feeling than religion, nothing more strongly affects the comforts of citizenship than the manner in which its rights are treated by the civil power. Other grievances may be borne, but contempt of these arouses the keenest sense of injustice. The most perfect religious equality can alone meet their just demands. If a final solution of

politico-religious difficulties is to be reached, the various bodies composing society, which is not accidentally but necessarily a mixed multitude, must cease to compete for the recognition and subsidy by the State of their religious distinctions; and Government must impartially cease either to affix the stamp of its patronage or the brand of its tolerance on religious parties, *giving all the equal right of a fair field.* Any other policy but complicates the evil. It is a striking fact, that the religious system laboriously disestablished at the Reformation by Knox, has been for nearly fifty years eating again the bread of the State in its colleges and schools, and is still extending its demands. *The political cause is obvious. It is the necessity of meeting the sense of inequality produced by the State Church system.* But let that system be terminated, an impregnable stand can then be made against the pressure of sects on the ground of equity and not of theological distinctions. Wedded, however, to this system, no policy is more in favour with leading politicians, than that which has been called "concurrent endowment," and against its subtle inroads and disguises, the greatest danger of the times, it is incumbent to watch.

To postpone the hour of erasing from the statutes the laws establishing the Churches of England and Scotland, and recalling national property applied to their purposes,—to avert the evil day of the cessation of grants to religious bodies, and of accompanying political influence,—no efforts will be spared by those interested. Church reform, schemes of comprehension, the alteration of the law of patronage, denominational advantages in education, all will be proposed,—anything to divide the ranks without, and divert attention from radical measures. But "surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." Long enough have the machinery and resources of the State been placed at the service of sects, and it is now more than time to meet

all such proposals *with the simple demand, "Disestablishment, Disendowment."* To this course the Synod has in its wisdom timeously pointed. *Then only shall we complete the work of Reformation,* and remove the dead fly from the ointment of our Protestantism.

The argument from political justice is in fact the immediate law of the statesman's policy, and a practical test, or short and easy method, by which he may determine its soundness. That can be no divine institution which requires for its maintenance the enforcement of injurious distinctions among citizens. It is not necessary, as it is not competent, for him to judge between the conflicting tenets of ecclesiastical parties. Enough that he cannot equitably patronise one section of the religious public at the expense of the feelings and resources of another ; and enough that the concurrent patronage of truth and error is only an aggravated form of provocation and scandal.

While, therefore, citizens cannot in justice call on the State to establish or perpetuate any religious institution, however agreeable to themselves, they have the right in equity to demand that no institution shall be either set up or maintained by public authority and public funds, which is offensive to their religious convictions, and that all civil establishments of religion, or exercise of civil authority in matters of religion, and all appropriation of the public resources to ecclesiastical and sectarian purposes, shall cease and determine. This being their right, it will be their duty to seek to mould the institutions of the State in conformity with the principles of justice and liberty.

To all who believe the interests of religion and justice to suffer from this system of State patronage and control of religion, the motive to exertion will be supreme. It is neither denied nor forgotten that motives equally conscientious may impel others to struggle for its continuance, and it is for each party to seek its object by

honourable and Christian means. Both cannot prevail. The system of State Churches has long retarded, as we believe, the progress of religion and sound legislation. We cannot consent to its continuance because some good men approve of it. This would be to abdicate our rights and neglect our opportunities ; to play into the hands of the enemy of truth and justice, and give a new lease to error and wrong. Let us rather go the more resolutely to the work of Disestablishment and Disendowment, assured that we only liberate religious forces hitherto hopelessly shackled, and secure for all true Church life and enterprise a free career ; at the same time that we pluck up one of the most fertile roots of political and social bitterness which have infested the history of nations.

To accomplish this object, the faithful exercise of our political rights, the legitimate use of the agencies of the press and the platform,—in particular, the proper exhibition of the principles of Scripture in the teachings of the pulpit,—will be necessary. Employing all means in the spirit of prayer and charity, seeking supremely the interests of the kingdom “which is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” we shall, with the divine blessing, in due time reap if we faint not.

We may then confidently hope that Christian opponents, now apprehensive of evil, shall learn, as not a few have already begun to do from the fruits of disestablishment in Ireland, to thank us for benefits which, in spite of their resistance, we have been the instrument of securing to the Church and the world.

Signed in name and by authority of the Committee,

GEORGE C. HUTTON, *Convener*.







